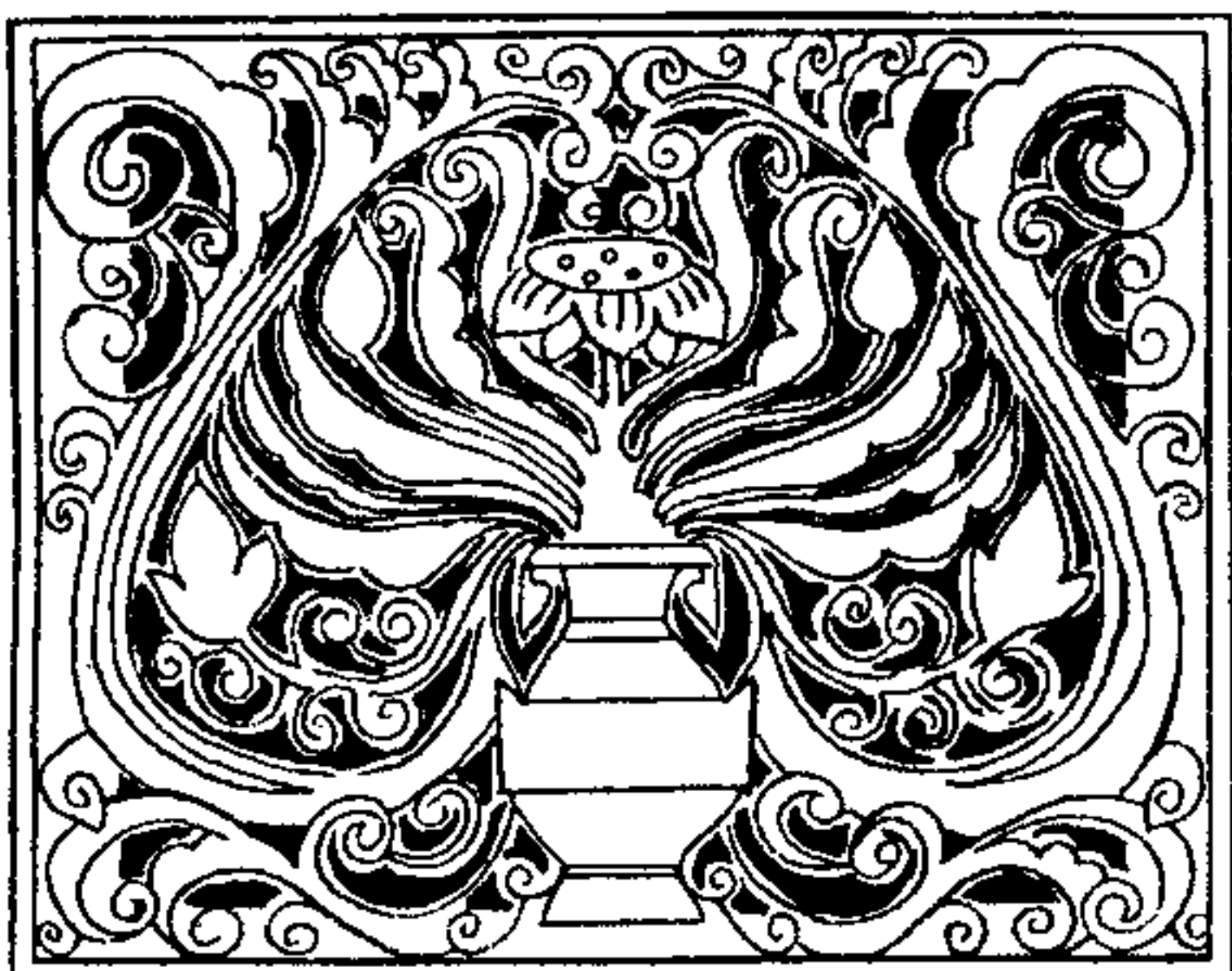




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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 101

JUNE 1996

No. 6

Divine Wisdom

HIGHEST FORM OF BHAKTI

(Sage Kapila to his mother Devahūti)

देवानां गुणलिङ्गानामनुश्रविककर्मणाम् ।
सत्त्व एवैकमनसो वृत्तिः स्वाभाविकी तु या ॥
अनिमित्ता भागवती भक्तिः सिद्धेर्गरीयसी ।
जरयत्याशु या कोशं निगीर्णमनलो यथा ॥

नैकात्मतां मे स्पृहयन्ति केचिन्-
मत्पादसेवाभिरता मदीहाः ।
येऽन्योन्यतो भागवताः प्रसज्य
सभाजयन्ते मम पौरुषाणि ॥

When all the powers of man's senses, which are ordinarily frittered away through external contacts, are purified through devotional practices and dedicated action, and they get naturally focused on Isvara (Sattva) exclusively, without any extraneous and self-centred motivation, and with a firmness which no obstruction can overpower—that state of mind is called Bhakti, or the highest form of devotion for the Lord. Such devotion is superior even to Mukti. It burns up the covering of ignorance in a person just as fire burns up objects put into it.

Some endowed with such Bhakti do not aspire for Moksha or even oneness with My Being; for their delight consists in serving Me and in working out My will (and not in becoming one with Me). They therefore congregate together and honour Me by adoration and participation in My works.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 3.25.32–4

Relationship with the Divine

Background

'Peace Through Work' was a topic discussed during a spiritual retreat for devotees conducted by one of our Ashramas. The conclusion of the talk was that the attitude of self-surrender to God, the sole Mover, during all our activities reduces the frictions and tensions of work; further, it transforms work into a spiritually fulfilling discipline. Therefore one should always remember the truth that God is the master of everything. This method brings peace not only while at prayer, away from work, but also while in the midst of work.

Not unexpectedly, a question put by a lady-devotee to the speaker at the end of the retreat ran something like this: I am a senior manager in a bank. Different problems keep cropping up every day. I have to exert myself to deal with such a variety of temperaments and situations. So, though I believe in God, how can I imagine and work as though He is the doer of everything? I have been unsuccessful in this.

The question is an ageold one. It troubles all spiritual aspirants, and is asked in ever so many ways. Equally, it has been answered so many times and in so many words. Nevertheless, it was answered again.

Bhāva

The essence of the the speaker's reply is useful for all of us. Because it centres round a teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that most of us have possibly glossed over while reading his *Gospel*.¹ And it is a teaching I have not so

far found as explicitly and emphatically taught anywhere other than in the *Gospel*. That is about *bhāva*. Meaning a particular attitude towards, a particular relationship with, the Divine; and not mystical ecstasy, in which sense too the word occurs more often in the *Gospel*.

What was pointed out to that devotee was that her question arose from an inconsistency in her *bhāva*. She was trying to practise, simultaneously, two bhavas—self-negation, and self-effort, each of which in fact belongs to or expresses a particular state of one's spiritual awareness in relation to God. One implies, 'I am nothing, God is the doer; my will is fictitious, Divine will is supreme.' The other implies, 'God exists, but I am the doer; Divine will is true, but I too have a small free will.' Hence the solution was to hold on to one bhava—whichever she found appropriate to her state and therefore could be *uniformly* maintained to deal with all the day to day demands on her.

Importance of bhava

Now, to understand better the deep implications of bhava, we should study it at its source, viz. the *Gospel*. There, as we know, Sri Ramakrishna has mentioned several things as *necessary* for realizing God—prayer, discrimination, longing, living in solitude, control of anger, lust, etc., and so on. These occur so frequently in the *Gospel*, and also in other scriptures, that we are quite

1. 'M.', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras:

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Tamil Nadu 600 004, 1974). The page numbers referred to in this editorial are of this *Gospel*.

familiar with them. But how many of us have noticed that, according to him, bhava too should be an indispensable part (*āṅga*) of our *sādhana*, spiritual practices for realizing God, as are japa etc.? For instance, he says, 'One must take up a definite attitude towards God. Then alone can one realize Him' (p. 576). Besides, how many of us have deliberately strived to have ONE bhava during both meditation and interaction with the world? In all probability, we relate to God mostly in a general way, or through shifting moods as His children, creatures, and so on. And, perhaps, sometimes we are not guided by any bhava at all, but by ordinary impulses.

One possible reason why most of us have overlooked the worth of bhava is that, substantial instructions on bhava are found only about six times in the *Gospel*, in both the English and the Bengali versions.²

Be that as it may, from the manner in which Sri Ramakrishna presents it, bhava undoubtedly stands out as the vital factor, next only to divine grace, that adds clear focus and emotional intensity to sadhana. True, this bhava is already there, implicitly though, in the numerous places where he has taught about longing for God (*vyākulatā*) or said that a seeker of God should look upon Him as one's own. Still, 'Love God as one's own' is a broad idea. But bring in Sri Ramakrishna's specific utterances on bhava and see how it immediately sharpens that general idea.

2. The *Gospel's* Index gives only one page number for bhava, attitude! The Bengali version, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, however, gives a long list. The numbers of the other pages of the *Gospel* on which helpful discussion on bhava is found are—42, 103, 436, 438, 653, 662, 674–5, 805; also see 434–5, 533, 650, 659 for related discussions.

Types of bhava

What he has said the first time in the *Gospel* on bhava (p. 42) makes our point clear:

But in order to realize God, one must assume one of these attitudes: shanta, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, or madhura.

Shanta, the serene attitude. The rishis of olden times had this attitude toward God. They did not desire any worldly enjoyment. It is like the single-minded devotion of a wife to her husband. She knows that her husband is the embodiment of beauty and love, a veritable Madana.

Dasya, the attitude of a servant toward his master. Hanuman had this attitude toward Rama. He felt the strength of a lion when he worked for Rama. A wife feels this mood also. She serves her husband with all her heart and soul. A mother also has a little of this attitude, as Yashoda had toward Krishna.

Sakhya, the attitude of friendship. Friends say to one another, 'Come here and sit near me.' Sridama and other friends sometimes fed Krishna with fruit, part of which they had already eaten, and sometimes climbed on His shoulders.

Vatsalya, the attitude of a mother toward her child. This was Yashoda's attitude toward Krishna. The wife, too, has a little of this. She feeds her husband with her very life-blood, as it were. The mother feels happy only when the child has eaten to his heart's content. Yashoda would roam about with butter in her hand, in order to feed Krishna.

Madhura, the attitude of a woman toward her paramour. Radha had this attitude toward Krishna. The wife also feels it for her husband. This attitude includes all the other four.

Here each one of us, though different from one another in temperament and circumstances of life, has something practical to gain.

Application of bhava

To explain, let us concentrate on one of the bhavas, the *dāsya*, which fits into the context of the question we began with. That devotee may find in this bhava THE solution to her doubt. She loved God, and possibly considered Him her own. But now she gets a better focus—‘Love God as your own master.’ This gets still sharper with an example—‘Love God as your own master, the way Hanuman loved Sri Rama.’

Thus she can draw some more conclusions. This *dasya-bhava* is ideal for almost all of those—men and women—who are inescapably tied to society and activity. Besides, for the majority of such people, whose physical individuality or body-consciousness is strong, this bhava is just right—as we learn from Hanuman. He is quoted elsewhere as having said to Sri Rama, ‘*Deha-buddhyā tu dāso’ham*, when feeling that I am my body, I am your servant.’

Again, consider the Sri Rama-Hanuman relationship, as also Hanuman’s character as such, depicted in the *Ramayana*. We see that the *dasya-bhava*, far from demeaning the ‘servant’, lifts him spiritually and bestows a steady inner peace despite having to face tremendous odds. Nor does it suggest in the least a timid or dull-witted ‘yes, sir’ mentality.

Then, take Sri Ramakrishna’s remark (quoted above), ‘A wife feels this mood (bhava) also’. This reveals that the *dasya-bhava* is not for males alone. Even a wife, like our questioner, or for that matter any woman, may adopt this attitude. It is capable of infusing her with the courage and, as Sri Ramakrishna has said (see the

first quote), ‘the strength of a lion’ while working for her family and in society.

Further, Sri Ramakrishna’s teachings on the *dasya-bhava* answers an important question: Is this bhava meant for only those who believe in God with form, in a personal God? The clarification we get from the *Gospel* is: No. An advaitin, one inclined to meditate on oneself as the Atman that is identical with the formless Divine, Brahman, is no doubt likely to have the *shanta-bhava* (see the first quotation). But there can be advaitins who choose the *dasya-bhava* for their day to day activities. This we understand by placing side by side two of Sri Ramakrishna’s instructions:

As long as God retains the ego in a man, he should establish a definite relationship with God, calling on Him as Master, Mother, Friend, or the like (p. 674).

God keeps in many people the ‘ego of a jnani’ or the ‘ego of a bhakta’ even after they have attained Brahmajnana. Hanuman, after realizing God in both His personal and impersonal aspects, cherished toward God the attitude of a servant, a devotee (p. 436).

Incidentally, from the above we have a very good explanation for how Swami Vivekananda, a great advaitin, was able to bring into his life, into his mission, that extraordinary energy, like that of Hanuman, or like that of a lion. That also helps us understand a little better another of Sri Ramakrishna’s practical instructions: Attend to all your works after tying the knowledge of Advaita in a corner of your cloth.

Thus, even a short study of the *dasya-bhava* throws so much more light on our practical problems—how to build an emo-

tional bond with God? how to harmonize love for God and our daily life? how to deal with our seemingly insurmountable and complex worldly problems? and so on. So too will a study of the other bhavas taught in the *Gospel*.

How to choose a bhava

There are several bhavas mentioned there, all variants of the principal bhavas mentioned on p. 42. For instance, the attitude associated with a bhagni (sister), stri (mistress), sakhi (female companion), santana (child), Hara and Gouri, Sita and Rama, Radha and Krishna, and Satchidananda (Brahman). In essence they are relationships, as between human beings, established with God to become intimate with Him. A few of these relationships extend to the world too. For example, Sri Ramakrishna considered the Divine his Mother. As a result, he looked upon all women as forms of the Divine Mother. Yashoda, who considered God her child, presumably had a motherly attitude towards all human beings.

Most of us perhaps consider God our father or mother. There may be some who look upon God as their child or friend. But how to know which is the correct attitude suitable for us? First, this question arises only when we wish to make use of bhava as a part of our sadhana. Second, usually a person chooses a bhava without being tutored. For example, we knew of two ladies in Calcutta, both in their middle ages, one of whom considered Swami Vivekananda her child, and the other her brother.

Even so, the test to determine that we have adopted the right attitude is—consistency. 'A servant of God' can be a leader, but never a tyrant of his fellow-beings; nor can he be sloppy, indolent, selfish, or unprincipled in his work. The character and quality of work of a 'servant of God' should stand

witness to his relationship with God. Similarly, one may like to practise during meditation the satchidananda-bhava, or the 'I am Brahman' attitude. But that person may turn out to be worldly, cowardly and unethical in the workaday world. Such contradictions are proofs that those persons are unfit for those bhavas. On the other hand, when a right bhava has been adopted, one finds that it is possible to maintain that specific attitude day after day—during japa and meditation as also while dealing with all sorts of people and situations.

Next, a rightly chosen bhava gives over time a constant and a distinctively spiritual cheerfulness, strength, fearlessness, calmness and confidence. To give a crude example, the feeling that tells us that our bhava is correct is somewhat like the feeling that tells us that we have selected the right pair of shoes or got the right dentures. That is, appropriateness is proved or disproved by usage.

Conclusion

So a bhava, suitably selected and assimilated, deeply influences and integrates our relationship with God and with the world. Finally, it even leads us to the realization of Brahman. For, from the highest standpoint of Advaita, bhava is just a line drawn on water:

Suppose you draw a line on the surface of water with a bamboo stick. The water appears to be divided into two parts: but the line doesn't remain for any length of time. The 'servant I' or the 'devotee I' or the 'child I' is only a line drawn with the ego and is not real (p. 103).

Bhava thus can be a great factor in our sadhana. As with the other teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, we can try utilizing bhava too for our spiritual growth. □

Madhusudana Saraswati on the Bhagavad-Gita

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

WHY ONE DEVIATES FROM ONE'S GOAL

In this connection, with a view to following the teaching of the Lord by eliminating the cause that leads one to perform *kāmya*(-karmas) and *pratiṣiddha*(-karmas), (Arjuna asks) in order to ascertain that cause:

अर्जुन उवाच

Arjuna uvāca

Arjuna said:

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

Atha kena prayukto'yam

pāpam carati pūruṣaḥ;

Anicchannapi vārṣṇeya

balādiva niyojitaḥ. (3.36)

Now then, O scion of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty (Kṛṣṇa), impelled by what does this man commit sin even against his wish, being engaged by force, as it were.

The root cause of evil was stated in the verses, 'In the case of a person who dwells on objects...' (2.62) etc., and in the present context also it has been stated very elaborately in the verse, '(The knower of the All should not disturb them) who, wholly deluded by the guṇas of Prakṛti,' etc. (29). As regards this, are all of them causes of equal importance, or is one alone the primary cause while the others are its supplementaries? As to that, in the first case great effort

will be needed for eradicating all individually. But in the latter case, self-fulfilment will follow from the eradication of one alone.

Therefore, tell me, *prayuktaḥ*, impelled; *kena*, by what cause; does *ayam puruṣaḥ*, this man, who is deluded about all knowledge by not following Your teaching; commit *pāpam*, sin, all that results in evil—(i.e.) perform, with desire for results, the various kinds of actions, for instance the *kāmya* (-karma) rites such as the *Citra*-sacrifice, as also the *Syena*-sacrifice etc. which are a means to destroying enemies, and the prohibited (*pratiṣiddha*-karmas) acts such as eating poisoned meat; *anicchan api*, even against his wish, even though from his own side there is no desire to do so; but he does not undertake actions taught by You, which consist in detachment and lead to the highest human Goal, although he has a liking for them. Besides, such a thing is not possible unless there is subservience to some external impulsion.

The meaning is: Therefore tell me of that which impels one to the evil path and owing to which a person, *niyojitaḥ*, engaged; *balāt*, by force; *iva*, as it were, like a servant by a king, performs that kind of work even while aware of its being opposed to Your teaching and resulting in all kinds of evil so that (following Your instruction) it can be uprooted on being apprised of it. By addressing Him as 'Vārṣṇeya, O Scion of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, who have incarnated out of compassion in the line of Vṛṣṇis, in the fami-

ly of my mother's father', Arjuna implies, 'I who am the son of a daughter of the Vrsnis should not be ignored by You.'

On being asked thus by Arjuna, (the Blessed Lord says in answer) what is approved by the Śrutis,

Others, however, say, 'This self is identified with desire alone',¹ 'This (aggregate of desirable objects) was but the self in the beginning—the only entity. He desired, "Let me have a wife, so that I may be born (as the child). And let me have wealth, so that I may perform rites", etc.'²

श्रीभगवानुवाच

Śribhagavānuvāca

The Blessed Lord said:

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

Kāma eṣa krodha eṣa

rajogūṇasamudbhavaḥ;

Mahāśano mahāpāpmā

viddhyenamihā vairiṇam. (3.37)

This desire, this anger, born of the quality of rajas, is a great devourer, a great sinner. Know this to be the enemy here.

That about which you asked, the cause leading one forcibly to the evil path, is *eṣaḥ*, this; *kāmaḥ*, desire, indeed, the great enemy, because of which creatures come to all kinds of grief.

Is not anger also seen to be an impeller to blackmagic etc.?

Hence He says: *Krodhaḥ eṣaḥ*, this anger.... Desire itself, when obstructed by some cause, turns into anger. Therefore anger also is this desire indeed. The idea is that, when this great enemy itself is warded off there occurs attainment of all the human goals. For knowing the means of warding that off, He states its cause: *rajogūṇa-samudbhavaḥ*, born of the quality of *rajas*: that of which the quality of *rajas*, possessed of the nature of sorrow, activity and strength, is the source. Hence, since the effect follows the cause, therefore that (desire) also is of that nature. Although the quality of *tamas* is also a source of it, still since *rajas* has predominance in sorrow and activity, therefore, that itself is mentioned. Hereby it is said that when *rajas* becomes attenuated by the quality of *sattva*, that (desire) also gets eliminated.

Or (the question is), How does it become the impeller to the evil path?

Hence He says: (*rajogūṇa-samudbhavaḥ*) that from which springs the quality of *rajas*, which is possessed of activity etc. For, when desire itself, in the form of hankering for objects, comes into being, it activates *rajas*, and thereby impels a man to sorrowful actions. The idea is that it must therefore be destroyed.

Is it not that conciliation, bribery, sowing dissension, and punishment are the four expedients (for overcoming one's enemy)? Among them, when the first three are impossible the fourth is to be employed, but, surely, not suddenly.

Having this apprehension in mind, He states the qualities (of desire) by way of showing the impossibility of the (first) three: *mahāśanaḥ*, a great devourer; *mahāpāpmā*, a great sinner. That which consumes (*aśana*) much (*mahat*) is *maha-aśanaḥ*, as is stated in the Śmṛti,

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, 4.4.5.

2. *Op. cit.*, 1.4.17.

Knowing that all the paddy, barley, gold, cattle and women that are in the world are not sufficient for a single man, one should resort to desirelessness.³

So it cannot be placated through gift; nor even through conciliation and sowing dissension, because it is *mahā-pāpmā*, a great sinner, very ferocious. For, one commits sin under the forcible impulsion of it, though aware of the evil consequence. So, *viddhi*, know; *enam*, this, desire; to be the *vairiṇam*, enemy; *iha*, here, in the world. Thus all this has been amplified by the writer of the *Vārtika* in the course of explaining the Śruti, 'This (aggregate of desirable objects) was but the self in the beginning,' etc.:⁴

If the above-mentioned eligible person be independent as regards engagement or disengagement, then it should be explained why this one proceeds along the path of transmigration as a helpless man, but is not impelled along the path that is characterized by detachment and leads to the total destruction of the evil of transmigration?⁵

One proceeds (along the path of transmigration) even while aware of its being productive of evil. This kind of behaviour is not seen anywhere unless one is under the control of something

else. Hence that which impels a person desirous of the highest good to undesirable actions has to be mentioned, so that it may be eliminated. The next Śruti ('He desired,' etc.,⁶) is meant for this;⁷

Since this person had not attained the highest human goal and was beset with infinite evils, therefore the fool 'desired' the unachieved human goals through efforts. Similarly, being possessed of desire arising from nescience, the unenlightened man wants to discard evils existing in himself. And hence there is the Śruti, 'Because, indeed...'.⁸ It is not seen here (at any time) that a desireless man has any activity. Indeed, whatever a creature does is an act of desire.⁹ 'This desire, this anger,' etc. is a statement of the Smṛti. Hence it is not known that the impeller is anything other than desire.¹⁰

'(It is not seen here at any time that) a desireless man' (above) is a saying of Manu¹¹. The remaining portion is clear.

(To be continued)

6. *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad*, 1.4.17.

7. *Brhadāranyaka-Vārtika*, 1.4.1811-12.

8. *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad*, 4.4.5.

9. This is according to the reading, *akāmasya kriyāḥ kāściddṛśyante neha karhicit*. There is another reading: *Akāmataḥ kriyāḥ kāściddṛśyante neha kasyacit*—It is not seen in this world that anyone whosoever does some work without desire.

10. *Brhadāranyaka-Vārtika*, 1.4.1814-17.

11. *Manu Smṛti*, 2.4.

3. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata*, 9.19.13.

4. *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad*, 1.4.17.

5. *Brhadāranyaka-Vārtika*, 1.4.1806-7.

The Soul in all is indeed One; It dwells in every being as his Innermost Guide. The diversity of souls is like the diversity of the reflections of the moon in the waves.

—*Brahmabindu Upaniṣad*, 12

Awakening of Spiritual Consciousness: The Vedanta Point of View

SWAMI ADISWARANANDA

A good deal of misinformation and misleading information is in vogue about Hindu mysticism—Tantric mysticism, Advaitic mysticism, and religious mysticism in general. Here is a valuable article on this important subject, based on the transcript of a talk the Revered Swami gave at the Vedanta Society of Northern California on May 30, 1994 at the Olema Retreat. Swami Adiswarananda is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is the spiritual leader of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York.

The Meaning of Awakening

The awakening of spiritual consciousness is the key to attaining the spiritual experiences described by all religious faiths. It is awakening in the real sense of the term. A person can be physically awake but intellectually asleep or even intellectually awake but still spiritually asleep. Spiritual awakening opens up a new horizon of spiritual awareness that dramatically changes the dynamics of a seeker's journey to the goal. Like a storm it takes over his mind and soul, lifts him up and makes him restless for the realization of truth.

Christian mystics designate it as a 'call' from within. St. John of the Cross describes it as the last rung of the mystical ladder.¹ Plotinus speaks of it as the soul's movement towards the Godhead—the flight of the alone to the alone.² Walt Whitman says, 'Swift arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all arguments of the earth.'³ To William James it is the 'overcoming of all the usual barriers between the

individual and the Absolute.'⁴ The tradition of Buddhism describes Buddha not as a prophet or saint, but as 'the awakened one', in a world where all are dreaming dreams of hope and happiness, power and glory.

Among the spiritual seekers, most are content with the assurances of the scriptures and observance of ceremonies. For them, religious life is at best intellectual stimulation, or at worst merely social formality. But there are some who are adventurers. They are not content with adherence to rituals, or assurances of the scriptures, or intellectual understanding of truth. They want something tangible and enduring, and so they struggle hard for spiritual awakening.

Vedanta considers spiritual awakening to be the awakening of the very soul. Such awakening is always preceded by moral and ethical awakening. In spiritual awakening the soul rises from its slumber in the subconscious state and begins to move toward the superconscious by crossing the barrier of the conscious. It is waking up to the Reality of all realities—Truth Absolute, described by the various texts as God, Pure Conscious-

1. Swami Yatiswarananda, *Adventures in Religious Life* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1969), p. 238.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

4. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), p. 419.

ness, nirvana and other terms.

The Need of Awakening

Direct perception of truth is the very essence of spiritual quest. It is different from blind belief, intellectual stimulation, or emotional thrill. Belief is believing in the beliefs of others, no matter who they are. Reasoning is a very weak instrument to lead us to the truth; often our so-called reason is used in an attempt to justify our preconceived opinions. Emotional thrill comes and goes, and is of no lasting value. None of these elements can silence our doubt, give us certainty, and transform us.

In contrast, direct perception is seeing through the soul's not the mind's eye. Direct perception of truth always silences doubt, is never negated by any other subsequent experience, is conducive to the welfare of all beings, is not opposed to reason and common sense, and finally, brings permanent transformation of character. Such perception never comes forth of itself. It is never given to us by anybody, nor can it be attained vicariously. It calls for awakening of spiritual consciousness. As Sri Ramakrishna says:

You may indulge in reasoning or discussion, but if you feel no longing or love, it is all futile. Second, the awakening of the Kundalini [spiritual consciousness]. As long as the Kundalini remains asleep, you have not attained knowledge of God. You may be spending hours poring over books or discussing philosophy, but if you have no inner restlessness for God, you have no knowledge of Him.⁵

5. Swami Nikhilananda, tr., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Abridged Edition (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1980), p. 344.

The Centres of Spiritual Consciousness

Tantra speaks of six centres of our spiritual consciousness, designated by the name *Kundalini*. They are located in the spinal column of the human body, where there are three principal nerve channels for the passage of energy. These are known as *Ida*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna*. The *Sushumna*, the central and most important nerve channel, is inside the spinal cord; *Ida* is at the left of *Sushumna*, while *Pingala* is at its right. Through *Ida* all sense-perceptions are received and sent into the brain, while through *Pingala* all motor responses are transmitted from the brain to the body. All three have their meeting point at the base of the spine.

The spinal cord resembles a number of digit eights placed horizontally and piled one on top of the other. The *Sushumna* channel begins at the lower extremity of the spine, runs up through the spine itself, and

Vedanta considers spiritual awakening to be the awakening of the very soul. Such awakening is always preceded by moral and ethical awakening.

extends to the top of the head. Contained within the *Sushumna* channel are six centres of consciousness, which have been described by Tantra as 'lotuses'. For ordinary persons, the channel of *Sushumna* remains closed at the bottom, and the head of each such lotus is hanging down. According to Tantra, these six centres range from the lowest plane of gross impulses to the highest plane of pure bliss.

The first centre is called *Mūlādhāra* (root support). Located at the base of the spine, it has four petals and is crimson in colour. It manifests the earth aspect of matter, governs gross physical urges, and controls the sense of smell. Dwelling on this level of existence,

a human individual is guided by gross, sub-conscious desires.

The second centre is called *Svādhiṣṭhāna* (own abode). It is located at the base of the organ of generation, is of vermilion colour, and has six petals. This centre manifests the water aspect of matter, governs the sense of taste, and controls the sense organ of the palate. Existence at this centre is constantly swayed by gross impulses and imaginations and by various animal propensities.

The third centre is known as *Maṇipūra* (city of jewels). It is situated in the region of the navel, has ten petals, and is of the colour of heavy dark rain clouds. This centre manifests the fire aspect of matter and controls the impulses of perception, especially sight. As clouds obstruct the vision of the sun, so do the clouds of emotions and impulses obstruct the clear vision of truth.

The fourth centre, known as *Anāhata* (uncaused), is located in the spine at the level of the heart. It has twelve petals and is of the colour of scarlet flame. This centre manifests the air aspect of matter, governs the perception of touch, and controls the emotional being of our personality, and especially the organ of touch. Existence at this centre is characterized by experiences that are subtle and spiritual, as opposed to gross and material. One distinctive feature of this lotus is that its filaments are tinged with the rays of the sun.

This fourth centre is distinguished from the 'lotus of the heart', which is eight-petalled and located below it. The lotus of the heart is not a centre of consciousness, but an inner recess resembling a lotus with its petals turning upward. This inner recess has been compared to a lotus, because many nerve channels (*nāḍis*) proceed from the heart and spread throughout the body like the rays of the sun. The lotus of the heart is

also known as *Ānandakanda* (root of bliss), in which concentration upon one's Chosen Ideal is usually practised.

The fifth centre is called *Viśuddha* (pure), located in the region corresponding to the throat. The lotus of this centre has sixteen petals and is of smoky purple colour. The fifth centre manifests the ethereal aspect of matter and influences our perception of sound and, therefore, the organs of hearing, speech and the power of perception. Existence at this centre is marked by complete purity.

The sixth centre is known as *Ājñā* (command, where the command of the Divine from above is received). The lotus of this centre is situated in the region between the eyebrows, has two petals, and is white in colour. This centre is the actual seat of the mind and controls all our thoughts and visions, and the dynamic movements of our will. By reaching this centre of consciousness, one attains a vision of truth that is almost absolute in nature. Beyond the six centres there is a plane called *Sahasrāra*. It is located at the crown of the head and has a thousand petals; it is as white as the silvery full moon, as bright as lightning, and contains all colours. The Sahasrara is the summit where individual consciousness meets with the all-pervading Universal Consciousness.

Through the practice of prayer and meditation, the inner consciousness slowly becomes awakened and travels upward, following the channel of Sushumna from the lowest centre (Muladhara), passing through the next five centres, and finally reaching the highest point (Sahasrara) at the crown of the head. The awakening of the first centre activates the roots of the memories of the past; the second, gross impulses; the third, awareness of the sense of individuality. The awakening of the fourth centre brings

spiritual experiences and visions; the fifth, partial spiritual absorption; the sixth, deep spiritual absorption but still with faint I-consciousness (*savikalpa samādhi*); and the Sahasrara, total spiritual absorption (*nirvikalpa samādhi*).

For most persons, the mind is forced to go back and forth between the three lower centres, at the organs of evacuation (base of the spine), generation, and the navel. At these stages, a person's mind remains immersed in worldliness. It constantly broods over the cravings of lust and greed; eating, sleeping, and procreation become its dominant preoccupations. All perception and cognition of the mind at these three centres are influenced by animal propensities.

But when the person's mind reaches the fourth centre, he experiences his first spiritual awakening. New vistas open up before him—he sees the same world in its fine and spiritual form, he sees light all

Direct perception of truth is the very essence of spiritual quest.

around, and visualizes the individual soul as a flame. When his mind reaches the fifth centre, he wants to talk and hear only about God and does not enjoy anything else. Conversations on worldly subjects cause him great pain, and he immediately leaves a place where people are talking of these matters. Reaching the sixth centre, his mind is taken over by a deep spiritual absorption that is not only spontaneous but also continuous. He sees the living form of God like a light inside a lantern; he wants to touch the form, but is unable to do so. Finally, when his mind reaches the crown of the head, he attains total absorption. Overcome by the intense inebriation of Pure Bliss, he loses all outer consciousness. His mind no longer

wants to come back to the level of body-consciousness. Only extraordinary souls can come down from that exalted state, but with great effort.

There is nothing mystical, miraculous, or esoteric peculiar to Tantra about the awakening and rising of Kundalini power. Kundalini in the form of cosmic energy is present in everything, even in a particle of matter. Only a fraction of it is operating, while the rest is left 'coiled-up' and untapped at the 'base-root.' While Vedanta describes the Absolute as Pure Consciousness, Tantra calls it Shiva-Shakti—Shiva as the Absolute and Shakti as Its creative power. Any conception of Pure Consciousness that denies Shakti is only half of the truth. The goal is to realize the truth as one by bringing Shiva and Shakti together.

The coiled-up Kundalini is the central pivot upon which the whole complex apparatus of the body and mind moves and turns. A specific ratio between the active and total energies of the Kundalini determines the present condition and behaviour of the bodily apparatus. A change in the ratio is necessary to effect a change in its present working efficiency by transforming the grosser bodily elements into finer. A transformation, dynamization, and sublimation of the physical, mental, and vital apparatus is only possible through what is called the rousing of the Kundalini and its reorientation from 'downward-facing' to 'upward-facing'. By the former the physical body has been made a 'coiled curve', limited in character, restricted in functions and possibilities. By the force of the latter it breaks its fetters and transcends its limitations.⁶

Awakening: True and False

Awakening can be temporary, false, partial, sudden, or stumbled-upon. A seeker

6. *Ibid.*, p. 580.

can have temporary awakening as a result of grief or other spiritually-stimulating external circumstances, or the nearness of a great spiritual personality. But such awakening does not last long, and consciousness falls. A person can experience false awakening due to heightened imagination. In partial awakening spiritual consciousness rises to the upper region to a certain extent, due to the practice of control of breath and other spiritual disciplines, but it soon comes down. Momentary excitement of emotions often causes the consciousness to rise suddenly, but it invariably falls when the excitement abates. The stumbled-upon state is one in which the seeker achieves awakening unexpectedly and is unable to handle its impact. Regarding this state, Swami Vivekananda observes:

In a good many cases there is the danger of the brain's being damaged; and as a rule you will find that all those men, however great they were, who stumbled upon this superconscious state without understanding it groped in the dark and generally had, along with their knowledge, some quaint superstitions.⁷

Awakening a little or partially or temporarily is always dangerous, because there is the fear of fall—and when the consciousness falls, it falls violently. The risk of falling remains until the consciousness passes the sixth centre. So once awakened, the consciousness must be kept moving upward. Any awakening achieved without the support of moral and ethical purity is always fraught with danger. A steel-frame moral foundation serves as a strong platform to stop the falling consciousness from rolling downward violently. An illustration of sud-

den awakening may be drawn from the book *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*, by Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of the Master:

One day a few Vaishnava devotees came with an absent-minded young man. We had never seen them before. The reason why they came was that they wanted to show the young man to the Master and know the Master's opinion about the strange spiritual state that had suddenly come upon him.

Word was sent to the Master and he saw the young man. The face and chest of the young man were red; and he was seen taking the dust of the feet of all with humility. As he was repeating God's

There is nothing mystical, miraculous, or esoteric peculiar to Tantra about the awakening and rising of Kundali power. Kundalini in the form of cosmic energy is present in everything, even in a particle of matter.

names he was having frequent tremors and horripilation, and both his eyes were reddish and a little swollen owing to an incessant flow of tears. He was of dark-blue complexion, was neither fat nor thin, and had a tuft of hair on his head. His face and limbs were graceful and well-built. He was wearing a white cloth without borders that was not very clean and had, we remember, neither wrapper nor shoes. He seemed quite indifferent to the cleanliness or preservation of his body.

We were told that the high-strung state had come on him suddenly when one day he was singing the praises of Lord Hari. Since then he had been taking virtually no food and having no sleep; he would weep day and night and roll on

7. Swami Nikhilananda, ed., *Vivekananda: The Yogas and Other Works* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1953), pp. 614–15.

the ground because God had not been realized. He had been in that state for the last few days....The moment the Master saw the young man he said, 'Ah! It is, I find, the commencement of the madhurabhava [spiritual mood of regarding oneself as the sweetheart of God]. But this state will not last; he cannot retain it. As soon as a woman is touched lustfully this spiritual mood will vanish.'

Be that as it may, the Vaishnava devotees accompanying the young man returned home with him. They felt a little consoled at the Master's words that at least the young man's brain was not deranged. However, a little afterwards news reached us that the Master's prediction was perfectly fulfilled; the young man had been overcome by the fateful calamity. He had ascended fortunately to a very high plane indeed owing to the momentary excitement of sankirtan [congregational religious singing and dancing], but alas he came down to a very low plane owing to his mind's reaction to the experience.⁸

Swami Vivekananda too warns the seekers about the danger of awakening the Kundalini in an untimely or sudden manner, due to indulgence in emotionalism:

During meditation suppress the emotional side altogether. That is a great source of danger. Those who are very emotional no doubt have their Kundalini rushing quickly upwards, but it is as quick to come down as to go up. And when it comes down, it leaves the devotee in a state of utter ruin. It is for this reason that kirtanas (congregational religious singing and dancing) and other

auxiliaries to emotional development have a great drawback. It is true that by dancing and jumping, etc. through a momentary impulse, that power is made to course upwards, but it is never enduring. On the contrary, when it traces back its course, it rouses violent lust in the individual.⁹

Signs of True Awakening

True awakening is preceded by certain signs, generally four in number. First is the growing discrimination between the real and the unreal. The seeker asks himself, 'Which is my real home, who is my real friend, what is my real wealth?' The second is intense dispassion. Imbued with such dispassion, the seeker, as Sri Ramakrishna says, sees the world as a deep well and his relatives as venomous cobras. He sees that every enjoyment is marred by fear:

The rich are afraid of thieves, the beautiful of deformity, the healthy of disease, the learned of rivals, the aristocrats of dishonour, the virtuous of slander. Yet man somehow forgets this truth in the rhapsody of his fear-haunted and momentary happiness.¹⁰

The third sign is the struggle for self-control, which causes the seeker to make an all-out effort to subdue the outgoing sense-organs. The fourth sign is great spiritual longing, an intense restlessness day and night for the knowledge of truth.

The succeeding signs of awakening begin to appear when consciousness reaches the fourth centre at the heart. The seeker

8. Swami Jagadananda, tr., *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), pp. 457 and 458-9.

9. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 7 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972), pp. 254-5.

10. Swami Nikhilananda, tr., *Self-Knowledge* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1946), p. 2.

experiences spiritual emotions like shedding of tears, continuous thrill in the body, horripilation, and so forth. He sees light and other visions, and hears voices. Often he hears within the uninterrupted sound of the spheres or the ringing of a distant gong.

There are five tested methods of awakening spiritual consciousness, according to Vedanta ...prayer ...repetition of a sacred name ...discriminative reasoning ...pranayama.

Succeeding signs without the background of the preceding ones are regarded as suspect, and preceding signs without the succeeding ones are meaningless. As Sankaracharya says in his *Vivekachudamani*:

The result of dispassion is knowledge, that of knowledge is withdrawal from sense-pleasures, which leads to the experience of the bliss of the Self, whence follows Peace. If there is an absence of the succeeding stages, the preceding ones are futile. (When the series is perfect) the cessation of the objective world, extreme satisfaction, and matchless bliss follow as a matter of course.¹¹

The surest sign of authentic awakening is the permanent transformation of character. The outward symptoms of deep spiritual fervour without renunciation, self-control, and devotion do not indicate authentic awakening. So it is said that out of one hundred seekers, eighty may become charlatans, fifteen may go insane, and only the remaining five may be blessed with a real vision of truth. Awakened consciousness brings steady wisdom, and a person of

steady wisdom has been aptly described by the *Bhagavad Gita* as awakened: 'In that which is night to all beings, the man of self-control is awake; and where all beings are awake, there is night for the muni who sees.'¹²

Methods of Awakening Consciousness

There are five tested methods of awakening spiritual consciousness, according to Vedanta. One is fervent prayer, in which the seeker feels himself like a helpless baby crying for its mother. The second method is *japa*, or repetition of a sacred name. Faith and love act as a most powerful lever to rouse the coiled-up Kundalini. Repetition of a sacred name creates sound vibrations that induce the consciousness eventually to rise. The third method is *vicāra*, or discriminating reasoning, by which the seeker tries to persuade the consciousness to wake up from its lumber. The fourth method is meditation. Meditation is keeping the mind focused like a searchlight on the consciousness, so that it will rise. The fifth method is *pranayama*, or control of breath, by which a person rouses the consciousness forcibly to the fourth centre.

By controlling the breath, the vibrations of thoughts, emotions, and activities of the mind are controlled, and an upward movement of consciousness is generated. However, attempts to awaken consciousness through control of breath, without first building a strong moral and ethical foundation of purity, may bring dangerous consequences, such as a breakdown of the nervous system, derangement of the brain, and even incurable disease. So the wisdom of the traditions of Vedanta cautions that recourse to pranayama is to be taken only when other risk-free methods have been tried and have

11. Swami Madhavananda, tr., *Vivekachudamani*, verses 419 and 420 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1970), p. 159.

12. Swami Nikhilananda, tr., *The Bhagavad Gita*, II.69 (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1979), p. 99.

failed. The safest way, according to this wisdom, is that of japa and meditation. A disciple once asked Sri Ramakrishna's eminent direct disciple, Swami Brahmananda: 'Sir, how can the Kundalini be aroused?' The Swami replied:

According to some, there are special exercises, but I believe it can best be done through repetition of the Divine Name, and meditation. Especially suited to our present age is the practice of japa, or constant repetition of the Divine Name and meditation upon it. There is no spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the mantra.¹³

Success depends upon sincerity and intensity of effort. Only real effort can bring a real result. There is a humorous story that a man who lived alone in an apartment was faced with an invasion of mice, and so one day he bought a mouse trap. Before going to bed, while setting it up, he realized he needed a piece of cheese to put in the trap to attract the mice. Upon opening the refrigerator he found to his dismay that he had no cheese. Desperate, he thought that after all mice were dumb creatures, and it wouldn't matter if he put a picture of a piece of cheese in the trap instead of real cheese. So he cut a picture of cheese from a catalogue, put it in the trap, and went to bed. Upon waking up the next morning he was anxious to see the result. Lo and behold, he saw that the picture of the cheese was gone and in its place was a picture of a mouse!

Yet when everything has been said, the question that remains is: can spiritual awakening be scheduled? The answer is no. No spiritual practice can hurry awakening. Such awakening comes by divine grace, and

the descent of this grace cannot be programmed. Yet spiritual practices are necessary. They prepare our physical and mental system for the blessed moment. Spiritual awakening comes like a full burst

True awakening is preceded by certain signs, generally four in number. First...the seeker asks himself, 'Which is my real home, who is my real friend, what is my real wealth?' The second is intense dispassion....Third is struggle for self-control....Fourth is great spiritual longing.

of light and our body, mind, and nervous system must be made ready for the impact of that burst. Nobody knows when that blessed burst will come, and so we must wait and prepare ourselves. We feel drawn to the Divine only when the Divine draws us. We rise to God-consciousness when God lifts us up. We feel longing for Him when He longs for us. □

What though thy bed be frozen earth,
Thy cloak the chilling blast;
What though no mate to cheer
thy path,
Thy sky with gloom o'er cast—

What though if love itself doth fail,
Thy fragrance strewed in vain;
What though if bad o'er
good prevail,
And vice o'er virtue reign—

Change not thy nature, gentle bloom
Thou violet, sweet and pure,
But ever pour thy sweet perfume
Unmasked, unstinted, sure!

—To An Early Violet,
Swami Vivekananda

¹³ *Adventures in Religious Life*, p. 251.

Bondage

DR. B. R. DEY *

The senses fail to reach the cave
Where resides my pure soul,
Am I then destined the life of a slave
And never attain the cherished goal?

My soul weeps in body-mind cage
And urges me to make it free,
I try and try from age to age
Yet not find the long-lost key.

Things and thoughts snatch away
My moments of supreme bliss,
How long the senses' painful sway
Will hide the land of peace?

My Lord, I beg thy divine grace
To guide me to my only goal.
Where thou art with radiant face:
Lead me to my deathless Soul!

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Our Silent Communication

SUNIL K. SENGUPTA

In solving the problems created by the Communications Revolution, which has brought disruptive changes in the societies of East and West, there is an imperative need for Silent Communication, meaning the development of our mental power. Believing that Swami Vivekananda 'gave us the most brilliant exposition on the nature, functioning, and power of Silent Communication', the author, inspired by the Swami's Raja Yoga, concludes that 'Wisdom is to be invoked through meditation—yoga'.

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In the context of the Communications Revolution sweeping throughout the world, bringing in its trail far-reaching social, political and economic consequences, the study of Mass Communications has assumed great importance. When initiating the subject of communication—theories and practices—to our students, we tell them about the types and levels of communication. Students learn about the three levels of communication: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Mass Communications, and the two types: Verbal and Non-verbal. A brief discussion of these levels and types of human communication will be helpful in introducing the subject matter of our consideration, the role of Silent Communication.

The basis of all human communication is *intrapersonal* communication, i.e. communication within oneself. As the term implies, *interpersonal* communication means communication between two or more individuals in a face-to-face situation. Since our socially important messages are required to flow to many people, and as quickly as possible, it is hardly practicable to rely on face-to-face communication. Today's mass communication fulfils this need of carrying all our important messages to a large

body of people—even millions—at a time, with the help of modern mass media.

Be it face-to-face communication or mass-mediated communication, the message must first be conceived and framed mentally before transmission by individuals involved in these two levels of communication. While discussing a topic in a class the teacher is all the time thinking and framing his ideas on the subject in a proper sequence of words before transmitting those ideas to the students. Since the process of thinking and framing the ideas and verbally communicating the same is simultaneous, we are not conscious of this process of communication within ourselves, i.e., the interpersonal communication, which acts as the basis of all human communication.

Needless to say, intrapersonal communication is non-verbal, since an idea is conceived silently before it is expressed verbally. In the thought-stage, intrapersonal communication may not have any outward verbal expression. At the same time such communications often have outward symbolic expressions without any audible sound, for example, a smiling face, an angry face, a sympathetic or loving gesture such as a touch, a pat on the shoulder and myriad

other gestures and postures. Such non-verbal communications often prove much more meaningful than verbal communications.

Finally, in all levels of communication, some feedback response is a must for making the communication effective, since without a feedback response it is not possible for the sender to know whether the message sent has been well or ill received by the receiver. In case the feedback response is negative or short of what was anticipated, the message may have to be restructured to ensure its acceptability at the receiving end. Again, communication feedback response is not a onetime event, but mostly a continuous flow, with the sender and the receiver exchanging their positions from time to time. Human communication thus functions in a dynamic, circular process.

Coming back to the theme of non-verbal communication, it is necessary for us to understand that our non-verbal communications need not always have outward expressions in the form of gestures and postures to be effective. Non-verbal communication arising only in silent thought may very often be much more powerful than all our verbal and non-verbal expressed communications put together. Unfortunately our syllabus for teaching the subject of communication to the students hardly touches on the subject of *silent communication* and its role in human affairs.

Silent Communication—Its Nature and Power

To understand the nature of our silent communication, let us draw on the vision of our ancient Indian sages. As is well known, our ancient sages did not accept the manifest as ultimately real. Their inquiring minds delved deep to find what lay behind the manifest state. A *śloka* in the *Rig-Veda* speaks of three unmanifest stages of *Vāk*, the uttered manifest word: 'Four are the stages of

speech, Brāhmanas, who are wise, know them; three of them are hidden and motionless. Only in the fourth stage comes the gross words spoken by the people.' The hidden stages have been identified as *parā*, the unformed state, *paśyanfī*, the sub-conscious thought state, and *madhyamā*, the dream state. In other words, the original source of *Vāk* (speech) is transcendental abstract Knowledge. From this abstract Knowledge arises, through contact with Maya, ego (I-consciousness), which in turn gives rise to thought, and finally from thought arises the spoken word. The question therefore arises—which is more powerful, the fourth stage—*vaikharī*, the manifested word—or the source that remains hidden?

Experiments have shown that, compared to the fourth stage (*Vāk*, or speech), the other hidden stages constituting the 'Silent Communication' state, are much more powerful.

Silent Communication—Its Operation

We have earlier explained how communication within one's self is the basis of all expressed forms of communication, be it oral, written or non-verbal symbolic expressions such as gestures, postures, etc. In fact all human actions arise from thought. Thought is thus a force, constituting a veritable energy field. In a face-to-face verbal communication, words uttered by us move in vibrating sound waves. The varying sound pressure, constituting the signal, is transmitted through the air. The receiver's ears, functioning as an inverse transmitter, convert the signal into the original voice-message instantly, following the principle of energy transformation.

Similarly, our silent thought, being a force, has a motion and vibration. It does not remain confined to the thinker, but spreads out in waves and ripples to reach others and affect them. Again, like other levels of com-

munication, our silent communication, which spreads out to reach others existing on similar thinking wave-lengths, gets responses (called in popular jargon 'feedback'). When a good thought arises in one's mind and spreads out to reach many others tuned to receive it, a plethora of similar good thoughts bounce back to the original thinker in the form of feedback responses.

In other words, one unit of silent communication in the form of good or noble thoughts brings back in its trail multiple units of similar communications from the receiving end. Messages and feedback responses thereafter move to and fro in a continuous dynamic circular flow. In the process all the thinkers of good or noble thoughts elevate themselves further and further. In a similar process all those whose silent communications emit only evil or wicked thoughts, denigrate themselves more and more. That explains why someone falling from the high moral plane and succumbing to the lure of sinful temptations, gradually descends to more and more evil acts, eventually losing even the pricks of conscience. In fact all our silent communications, good or evil, substantial or banal, permeate the atmosphere and bounce back to those on a similar thinking plane. Whether to receive the good or the evil, the noble or the degrading—the choice is up to us.

Among the modern Indian sages it was Swami Vivekananda who gave us the most brilliant exposition on the nature, functioning and power of *Silent Communication*. In his book, *Raja Yoga*, Swamiji says:

Every day of our lives we throw out a mass of good or evil, and everywhere we go the atmosphere is full of these materials. That is how there came to the human mind, unconsciously, the idea of building temples and churches. Why

should man build churches in which to worship God? Why not worship him anywhere? Even if he did not know the reason, man found that the place where people worshipped God became full of good tanmatras [tangible psychic influences]. Every day people go there, and the more they go the holier they get, and the holier that place becomes. If any man who has not much sattva in him goes there, the place will influence him and arouse his sattva quality.

Here, therefore, is the significance of all temples and holy places, but you must remember that their holiness depends on holy people congregating there....It is not the building, but the people that make a church....That is why sages and holy persons, who have much of this sattva quality, can send it out and exert a tremendous influence day and night on their surroundings. A man may become so pure that his purity will become tangible. Whosoever comes in contact with him becomes pure.¹

In our day-to-day life we find that some people, by their mere presence, attract us, while others may repel us, even though we might have met both of them for the first time. In the presence of some we feel calm and serene, while the presence of others makes us tense.

I crave the indulgence of narrating here a personal experience of mine. While in Bombay on an official trip in the early eighties, I came to know that Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, who was then the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, had arrived in Bombay for a short stay. I decided to have his *darshan* and went to the Mission's branch at

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1989), vol. 1, pp. 251-2

Khar in the afternoon. On arrival I found quite a large gathering of nearly a hundred devotees had assembled and were waiting downstairs in the office. Soon we were taken upstairs and asked to wait in another room.

The revered Swamiji arrived, seated himself and told us that as he was tired he wouldn't be able to talk to us. He asked us to sit closer to him and spend some time in his presence. He was sitting on a comfortable chair with his eyes closed and hands folded on his lap. A pindrop silence descended. All of us assembled that afternoon before the holy man, absorbed in his silent meditation, felt that we were being taken gradually to a higher and higher plane. Forgetting the cares and anxieties of mundane life, we became oblivious of the time and place. When the revered Swami opened his eyes, more than forty-five minutes had passed. All of us felt blessed by this experience.

Our silent communication not only reaches human beings, even plants and animals are affected. Scientific experiments have established that plants receiving the loving touch, prayer and goodwill of the owner grow faster and yield better. Animals recognize at first sight the people who have affection for them. Stories of even ferocious animals becoming non-violent in the presence of a holy person, who has only love and goodwill for all, are not lies. About the unlimited power of silent communication emanating from holy persons, Swamiji has the last word. In his well-known book, *Karma Yoga*, he says:

The highest men are calm, silent and unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought; they are sure that even if they go into a cave and close the door and simply think five true thoughts, and then pass away, these five thoughts will live through eter-

nity...penetrate through the mountains, cross the oceans and travel through the world. They will enter deep into human hearts and brains and raise up men and women who will give them practical expression in the workings of human life.²

The Need for Silent Communication

The Communication Revolution that is rapidly transforming the political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the world has brought information of all kinds within easy reach of millions of people. The sheer volume of information now crashing upon the human mind is simply staggering. Much of this information is being imparted through audio-visual modes, breaking the barriers of space, ignorance and national sovereignty.

The monopoly of the literate elite classes on the storehouse of information is now over. Thanks to satellite TV, Cable, Video and Computer technology, people living in one corner of the earth are now being exposed day in and day out to the social, political and economic conditions and life-styles of the people living in other corners, resulting in an acute awareness of similarities as well as differences in different societies. Societies, based on mass-marketing, mass-consumerism and mass-culture have been emerging not merely in the developed countries of Europe and North America, but also in the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Problems created by the new communication technology are mounting, demanding urgent solutions. Consumerism—clamouring for more and more material objects at any cost, regardless of moral considerations—has been creating

(Continued on page 396)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

A Dialogue with Franciscan Monks

In response to 'Ferment in the Religions of the World' public forum in which Swami Prabhavananda gave the address (see PB August, 1995), the Franciscan Order of Monks at the Santa Barbara Mission Monastery, Santa Barbara, California, invited the Swami to meet with them there for further discussion. The following is a transcript of that meeting, kindly made available to us by Edith D. Tipple, California.

Moderator: It was a great pleasure to attend Swami Prabhavananda's lecture at the Recreation Center. When we were there we were reminded that we had studied some of his books in Oriental Philosophy class. We thought, 'My, this is really something. We'll have to somehow get more of this.' The only way we knew of getting more was reading more of his books. However, no sooner had we arrived here than we found out that Swami Prabhavananda sometimes lives in Montecito right near us and ever since then we have been trying to sneak out to get over to Montecito. However, even though we never got there, Swami came to us today in response to a request we made after his lecture at the Recreation Center.

Swami Prabhavananda: Thank you. It is a pleasure, really, to meet so many earnest spiritual aspirants. We have a saying in our country that a smoker likes to meet smokers, so I feel I am not in strange company. Now, I don't know what you expect me to say, and so I invite questions from you and then let us see how it goes.

Q: *Would you feel, in general at least, that the moral principles and beliefs of the average Western man who is born and grows up in Western society and has no real acquaintance with Eastern religion are similar to those of Eastern religion?*

A: First I must point out to you that this distinction between Eastern and Western is a wrong distinction. After all, Christ, in whose name you have devoted

your lives, came from the East. He was not born in the West. About moral life or ethical life and spiritual life—I believe that all believe in the same thing.

For instance, you have devoted yourself to the life, the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. In our religion also we take vows. It is only that our language is different. Literally translated we say we have to give up cravings for progeny, cravings for wealth, cravings for name and fame. It comes to the same thing.

In moral principles we are concerned about not hurting any being in word, thought and deed, not coveting anybody's property, and in giving up lust. We point out that this whole world is bound by lust and greed, and that worldliness and God cannot go together. Worldliness means nothing but lust and greed.

To be able to devote yourself to God and realize God in this life—that is what we emphasize. To become a saint, transformation of the life and character is necessary. That transformation comes with the vision of God, with the realization of God.

Now, these are the main conditions to realize God: truthfulness in word, thought and deed, not hurting any creature, and of course chastity. You have to overcome lust. You have to overcome greed. What is meant by obedience, after all? To renounce your ego, this little self 'I' as distinct from everybody else. This is the cause of all bondage.

We point out that the first begotten son of ignorance is ego. From it comes attach-

ment, aversion, and clinging to the surface life. Jesus pointed out: 'He who loves this life shall lose it.' That clinging to life is something instinctive, through ignorance. This we have to overcome. How? There is only one way: to devote ourselves to God.

The first commandment is universal: 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with all thy strength.' It is the same in the East or in the West, north or south. There is one God we all worship. In the Vedic times, long long before any history existed, they said, 'Truth is one; sages call it by various names.' So it is. It is one God we worship. You call him Christ, I call him Krishna. You call it water, I call it *jal*. Is there a difference? One says Allah, another Brahman. What difference does it make?

and begins to suck the honey, makes a big, big noise. Then as it sits on the flower and drinks the honey, it becomes silent. Then again drinking the honey and becoming intoxicated, it makes a sweet humming noise.' Similarly, those who have no vision of God, who have not gone to the neighbourhood of God even, only have book knowledge, they make a big noise about God, saying that God can only be defined this way or that way. But as one begins to drink that honey, that sweetness that is in God, he becomes silent. And then again becoming God-intoxicated he begins to talk about God.

Some say He is Personal, some say He is Impersonal. Some say He is with form, some say He is without form. Some say He is with attributes, some others say He is without attributes. And they have drunk of

We point out that the first begotten son of ignorance is ego. From it comes attachment, aversion, and clinging to the surface life. Jesus pointed out: 'He who loves this life shall lose it.' That clinging to life is something instinctive, through ignorance. This we have to overcome. How? There is only one way: to devote ourselves to God.

There is a story about four men who were travelling in the desert. One of them said, 'Oh, I wish I had a drink of water.' Another said, 'I wish I had a drink of *pani*.' Another said, 'I wish I had a drink of *jal*.' What is this asking for *pani* or *jal* to satisfy your thirst? Is there anything but water that can satisfy your thirst? Then somebody brought water and they all said, 'That's it! That's it!' and all went for it. That is how it is.

Q: *Would you elaborate a little on your understanding of God?*

A: Is it possible to have any understanding of God? That is the trouble: you define God in this way, I define God in that way. You say, 'My God is the only God.' I say, 'My God is the only God.' What the truth is, is that they are equal.

I'll tell you what Sri Ramakrishna said about God. 'The bee, before it sits on a flower

the same ocean of nectar. But according to their vessels, they have taken different shapes. The ultimate Truth is: His name is Silence.

I'll tell you another story from our scriptures. A father sent his young boy to study religion. The boy studied for twelve years and came back and his father asked him, 'Tell me what you understand of God.' The boy gave a wonderful sermon, quoting the scriptures. The father said, 'My boy, go back. You have not yet learned what is to be learned. Go back. Study some more.' So he studied for another twelve years. Then he came back and this time the father again asked, 'Tell me something about what you have learned of God.' And he kept silent. Then the father said, 'Why, my son, your face shines like a knower of Brahman. You have known Him. His name is Silence.'

Q: We feel that Christ can be looked at with the aspect of silence, to the extent that we can't completely put down what He is, He's way beyond us...

A: The moment you put down who He is, you are limiting the Unlimited, the Infinite.

Q: But how do we explain that in Christ we see the love, the justice, the mercy, all aspects...

A: Wonderful! That's the right thing! Christ is like a door, through which you peep into the Infinite, the Absolute. Very true.

Q: From this point of view how do you speak of that Silence?

A: Ah! When you see Christ, and through that door you reach That, then you become silent. Until you have seen Christ you talk about Him and you say He is such and such. All right, very good. And then I will say, 'Krishna is also such and such.' But take Christ and Krishna and Buddha and Ramakrishna and shut them all up in one room, they will embrace each other. Shut a Protestant, a Catholic, a Hindu, a Buddhist, Minister and Priest together, they will fight one another. Because none of them has known anything about Christ or Buddha, Krishna, Ramakrishna. When you know, it is different.

See, even the dogs have canine instinct: they can recognize the master if he comes in different dress. But we human beings have not even that canine instinct, to recognize that Christ that comes in other dresses also. It is the same God. I hope I have not disturbed any of you.

Q: One common almost accusation made against Eastern religions is that they de-emphasize the individual so much as to annihilate him, so much as to dissolve him so he can't be a self anymore. I can't be 'me' anymore in a sense.

A: Good. Are you 'me' yet? Tell me,

which is your 'me'? Explain that to me. First define it. Your body? Your mind? Your senses? Your character? Would you like to be what you are all the time? Are you not changing? Are you not losing your 'me' all the time? So your 'me' is in the Infinite, in God. Find yourself in Him, then you have found yourself.

This Western idea of individuality... Good Lord, where is individuality? Define to me which is 'you'. Sages and saints—Christians and Hindus and Buddhists—have devoted years of lives to find out 'what am I?' Ultimately they lose themselves in God. Shall I quote to you Meister Eckhart? I consider him one of the great Christian mystics. This is what he said: 'Most people are so simple that they consider we are here and God is out there. But it is not so. God and I are one.' Is that blasphemous? Now find that 'I'—and not the 'me', not the 'I' that I know myself to be.

Q: How can you speak of transforming yourself then?

A: You can't transform yourself! But by devoting yourself to God, by loving God, He transforms you.

Q: Where is the self that seeks? Who is it that seeks the real identity?

A: Ah! He has given us this ego. He has given us this little self in order that we can love Him. And in order that ultimately the love, lover, and the Beloved can become one.

Q: I am visualizing... I have two identities in God. And yet I confuse who the seeker is.

A: You see, you have come to the Upanishadic thought that the Atman, the true Self, the real Self, the real 'I', and Brahman, 'I and my Father', are one. But that Atman is the Unchangeable Reality within each one of us. Through ignorance (we don't consider Adam and Eve), a universal ignorance from a beginningless time, the

Atman identifies itself with the sheaths covering the Atman. For instance, this body is a sheath, the mind is a sheath, the life principle is a sheath—and we are identified with that. Therefore we have the sense of ego. But when you go to analyse what this ego is, you find that it has no existence, no reality at all. And yet it is this ignorance that we centre our whole world upon, this false ego. That has to go.

All the Christian mystics point out to you—they are at one with Eastern thought—that the more you can empty yourself of yourself, there will be greater unfoldment of God. Isn't that right? This ego that we are holding onto, the individuality that you speak of, if you analyse, you find that it has no reality, no existence at all. It is just a shadow. I'll give you an imagery that we find in our scriptures.

A: That is its true nature! Your true nature is Divinity, Divine nature, and howsoever a man may go down and down and down, ultimately that Divinity in him unfolds itself. None will be lost. We are dreaming, we wake up. Christ said, 'To be born in spirit'. You don't have to die to be born in spirit—but you have to die the death of the ego to be born in spirit. Buddha showed the difference between ignorance and that awakening. This is sleep. You are asleep. You must become awakened. Buddha was asked, 'What are you? Are you a God?' He said, 'No.' 'Are you a man?' 'No.' 'What are you?' 'I am Buddha, the Awakened one.' And he said that everyone will be awakened, will have to be awakened.

Q: *The unity that comes with God, that we strive for, the unity with God, comes through*

This Western idea of individuality... Good Lord, where is individuality? Define to me which is 'you'. Sages and saints—Christians and Hindus and Buddhists—have devoted years of lives to find out 'what am I?' Ultimately they lose themselves in God.

Two birds of beautiful golden plumage are sitting on the self-same tree. The bird on the upper branch is calm and is in its own glory. The lower bird hops from one branch to the other, tasting the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree, unmindful of the upper bird, and it continues to enjoy and to suffer. When it has eaten a very bitter fruit, it looks at the upper bird and sees how calm and majestic, how glorious, that one is. Then again it forgets and goes on eating sweet and bitter fruits—until it has become completely frustrated by eating the bitter fruits. Then it looks at the other bird and goes nearer and nearer and nearer. And then it is gone! All the time it's shadow was playing. There has been just one bird: calm and majestic in its own glory.

Q: *What is the cause of the bird from above?*

love. But love only remains in separation; once we have identity, there is no more love. Is that right?

A: No. Love wants to be completely absorbed in the Beloved.

Q: *But as soon as it is absorbed, it is no longer love.*

A: I'll tell you about a song in our country. It says, 'I want to taste sugar and not be sugar.' That is your viewpoint. Ok. Very good. But. First learn to taste that sugar. And then see what happens. That is so great that you want to become sugar. These are facts of experience. There is no argument or reason about it. And this is not human love. In human love there is confusion. There is a poem of the Sufi mystics: There is a knock at the door, from inside us. 'Who is that?' 'I.' The door doesn't open. Again a knock. 'Who is that?' 'I.' Third time

when he knocks, 'Who are you?' 'Thou.'

So I don't say your idea is wrong. It is very good. Learn to taste that sugar. Love God. With all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength. And then see what happens. I don't have to prove it to you. You will prove it yourself.

Q: To me a person makes a choice very individually whether to turn towards the Beloved or not....

A: Oh, sure. In the beginning we have this individuality. Otherwise who would seek for God?

Q: But isn't love always striving, choosing?

A: Look. When you come to devoting yourself to God, your only choice is God. You have made your choice! What more do you want? Do you want again to choose somebody else? You fall in love with a girl. All right, then you choose the world, not God. And then you get into trouble. And then again you have to come back and choose God.

Q: Is this idea of union with God the same in all the Eastern religions?

A: Language does not express union with God. The Vedantic or Hindu idea is this: You are God and that God becomes unfolded. Ignorance covering: He becomes unfolded. Because there are not two in union, there is just one. This is the highest experience. I believe Meister Eckhart had that kind of experience.

Q: Several times you have mentioned your scriptures. Many of us are not very familiar with them, for example the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. Could you maybe explain the scriptures to us or describe them?

A: Well, I don't know. Suppose I ask you what is contained in the Bible. That is a very hard task. I give series of lectures on the *Gita*, series of lectures of the Upanishads.

Primarily they give the method and means by which to realize God.

In short, according to the *Bhagavadgita* there are four main ways or principles by which we can attain God. One is the path of discrimination; that is, you analyse to find what Reality is. Of course, in your discrimination you must define the Real as that which is abiding and eternal, and the unreal as that which today is, tomorrow is not. When you learn to discriminate this way, you find that God alone is the Reality, everything else is unreal. And He is your one treasure. And you devote yourself to Him. This is the path of Knowledge or discrimination.

Then there is the path of Love or devotion. The same philosophy, but: love God. In the *Gita* Krishna is the teacher and he says, 'Love Me, adore Me.;

And there is the path of Action, work as worship. Every act is an act of worship.

Then there is the path of Meditation, psychic control.

All these paths are brought out in the teachings of the *Gita*, and then Sri Krishna, the teacher, points out a harmonious combination of all of them. That is, we have emotional, intellectual, active, and meditative natures. So He says, 'Be emotional, love God—but be discriminative. Be active—at the same time be contemplative.' What we emphasize is—do not be one-sided: be active—be contemplative; be emotional—but don't be carried away, have discrimination. Of course this doesn't do justice to the *Gita*!

Q: Would you explain to us a little bit the doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation?

A: In order that you can believe in a just God, you have to believe that He will give you every opportunity and many opportunities through rebirth and reincarnation until you wake up. And that all will come to Him. That in short is reincarnation, the being given many chances. That's all.

Now, if this is your first birth and the

only chance you have got—what a calamity! You may say God has given us freedom, freedom of will, to devote ourselves to Christ. But why did He not give us the will to devote ourselves to God? Why did He create some morally blind? Why did He create so many differences amongst individuals? That God must be a cruel, unjust God. If this is the only chance that we have and some go to heaven and the rest go somewhere else—well, God is responsible for that. Who would like to love such a God, through fear? You cannot love God through fear.

But these are theological things. We can't agree on theology. Never. That's what I pointed out, that in one thing we can all agree; it is one God we all love. And we want to reach Him. In this very life. My Master at one time was asked, 'What about reincarnation?' He said, 'Oh, yes, yes, they say there is reincarnation, but learn to find God here and now. That is practical.'

Q: One thing that confronts our missionaries when we go to a country where the people are really so poor that their only concern is where they will get the next meal, their spiritual concerns are neglected because of that. Do you see this a problem in India?

A: I would say no. In spite of our poverty, in spite of our slavery for so many centuries, India has kept up Her spirituality. It is still a living religion in India. I have seen the masses of this country and I have seen the masses of India, the poor of India, and I would say that they are wonderful in India. What great depth of devotion these people have for God. But that doesn't mean that I want them to remain poor!

Q: In Christian religion we make the distinction between natural and supernatural. How would you look upon a couple who loved each other and they weren't familiar with any religion in particular? Would you call that love exclusively human, or does it in some way par-

ticipate in Divine love, or can you speak of a difference there?

A: I would say that all love is Divine. But when you love a man or a woman, not knowing that you are loving God in that person, you are loving the flesh or the character or the mind. It is misguided love no matter how true that love may be, no matter how faithful it may be. That will not lead them to God. But if you can love somebody with the sense and idea that 'there is God dwelling in him and I love God', that will lead you to the highest.

Your distinction of natural-supernatural is very true. That is what we call relative. We say 'relative and beyond the relative'. In the relative, for instance, there are three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. We live within these three states, and within these three states we cannot find God. But in the waking state we struggle to find God. And then we are lifted above the relative plane, beyond this waking plane, to the plane.... I cannot describe that plane. It is something beyond. that is all we can say—in a negative way. But this is the relative plane. When you have the vision of God or experience of God, it is something else, it is not this plane. Not that we see God with these eyes, but 'he who has eyes to see, sees Him; he who has ears to hear, hears Him.' That is another plane.

Q: What was your impression of Pope Paul's visit to India? What do you think the people felt towards him?

A: I already said that in my lecture. People in India don't care to what faith you belong. They accept and love and respect anyone who represents any spirituality. It is in our culture. We are many sects—but not sectarian. We embrace all religions, we accept them all as the truth. This is the example we give: There is a circle with a centre. The centre is God. There are so many radii. As you go through one of these radii, you reach the centre. And all radii meet in that centre.

That is our belief. We are trained from our childhood. This is a prayer that a Hindu learns as a little child: 'As there are different streams coming out from different sources all mingling in one ocean, similarly the many religions of the world, coming from differing sources, all mingle in that one great ocean of love.'

Q: I was very impressed by your attitude toward nature, how very close you seem to be to nature. I wonder if you could amplify on your outlook on the world and just how nature itself fits into your theology, on approaching God.

A: To approach God there are two things we must practise. One is to close our eyes, forget the world—just 'God and I'. But that's not enough. Then open our eyes and see how God dwells in everybody. And try to worship and serve God in all. If I see you're starving, I'll feed you—knowing you are God. If you are illiterate, I try to educate you—knowing that you are God. That is the way.

Q: How about using nature, say birds, a tree, or a beautiful...,

A: Wonderful! Sure, that's wonderful. But I give you one illustration of that. We were going on a pilgrimage. I was a boy about 20 years old at that time. We were travelling in the Himalayas, about 100 people. Men, women, old people. We were walking, and suddenly we saw this sunrise. Exquisitely beautiful sight! All the 100 people said, 'Ahhhhh!'—and then they sat down and closed their eyes....Can you imagine? You know what they said? 'If that is so beautiful, how much more beautiful would be the source of all that beauty!' And where is that source? The Lord within. And so they closed their eyes and tried to commune with God. Nature is beautiful, and we love that—but that should only remind us of God.

Q: Is Hinduism polytheistic or is it

monotheistic as far as...,

A: Neither polytheistic nor monotheistic, nor any thing your English words can convey. There is one God! Forget what you have learned about Hinduism, please.

Q: Is there a critical distinction...,

A: Either you have to take this as a relative creation or nothing at all. If you simply say it is all good, it is goody-goody, nothing else. There is good and there is evil. Then we get that one Creator, God, as creator of good, Satan as creator of evil. But what is good and what is evil? Can you define that? That which is good to you today becomes evil tomorrow. There is no such thing in this relative world as absolutely good or absolutely evil. For instance, I am talking to you. I am saying some good things, maybe, or maybe I have offended somebody, but still I am talking, I am breathing, and I am killing so many germs. It is not good for those germs that I am killing! So it is good and evil both, at the same time.

Q: Would the Hindu consider the principle of good and the principle of evil as equal elements?

A: They are both there in this universe. If there were no evil, you would not recognize the good.

Q: Will evil be defeated?

A: No, there cannot be any millennium in this world. No. You can defeat evil only by rising above both good and evil—in God, Goodness itself, Absolute. You have to rise above both pleasure and pain.

Q: What is the basis of Hindu ethics?

A: The basis of Hindu ethics takes one ideal in view: without purity of heart, there is no possibility of realizing God, and ethics are to purify the heart. That which would lead you to God, that is pure. That which would take you away from God, that is evil. That is all. Why should I be truthful?

Because I am seeking the truth. Why not hurt anybody? Because if I hurt anybody, I am hurting myself, I am hurting God. God is every being. And I am every being. That is our way of seeing things.

Q: The Western response to such a statement, 'If I hurt myself or someone else I'll be hurting God', on an abstract level, would be, 'But God is not hurtable.'

A: Yes, that's true, true. We admit that. But if I recognize God in you, I will not hurt you.

Q: Do you have any comment on the Christian belief that this world will come to an end?

A: And then what will remain?

Q: There will be no more men, no more individuals in this world.

A: All the fun will be taken away.

Q: In other words you do not believe the world will end.

A: No. Beginningless and endless. But for you and me, we get out of this mess.

Q: But you come back.

A: Oh, no, no. You don't come back when you get out of this mess! That is, if you are devoted to God, if you find God—then you don't come back. But you have to come until you find Him. This creation is infinite and is going on infinitely. That's His play. What will God do if all this creation is gone? Twiddle his thumbs?

Q: What do you say about Christ's statement that the world would end.

A: No, did Christ say that?

Q: According to his followers he did.

A: Ah, ah, ah, ah. I would like to see what Christ himself said. This is what our Master at one time said: 'In scriptures there

is sand and sugar all mixed up. You have to take the sugar and throw away the sand.'

At one time two young ladies I do not know knocked at my apartment door in Portland, Oregon. I opened the door and they said, 'We are preachers.' I said, 'Wait just a minute. I'm going to have a class. You come along with me.' So I went to the class and they followed. When it was over I asked them to ask questions. They said, 'Do you believe in the Bible?' I said, 'Yes, I do.' 'Every word of it?' In response I asked them, 'Do you believe every word of it?' 'Yes, we do.' 'Have you read every word of it?' I asked. 'No.' I said, 'That's why you believe.' Use your reason also. □

Brahma

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Traditional Agriculture*

K. VIJAYALAKSHMI

Knowing about and enriching traditional Indian agricultural practices will help us find ways of continuing with high-yield farming without poisoning our soil, water and air with fertilizers and pesticides. K. Vijayalakshmi says this is especially important today when modern technology has proved itself to be unsustainable. This article was written in the context of the 'Congress on Traditional Sciences and Technologies.'

Farmers all over the world have developed their own systems of farming and this has come about within the framework of local possibilities and limitations of ecology within the social, economic and political structure of their countries. If we want to bring about a major development in agriculture, it is logical that we first ground ourselves in the knowledge and experience we have.

While it is a cliché to say that 'India is a land of agriculture', it is indeed true that Indians have paid great attention to agriculture technologies and agronomic practices and achieved great sophistication in these areas over the centuries. These practices continue to prevail in many parts of the country even today.

Farming is still done according to the traditional method in many parts of the country. There has hardly been any modern technological inputs in large areas that practise dry agriculture—what has come to be known as 'survival agriculture'. Even in those areas where modern agriculture has replaced traditional agriculture, it is largely in the nature of additional inputs in an essentially traditional agriculture system.

Many of our farmers are authorities of traditional agriculture and the repositories

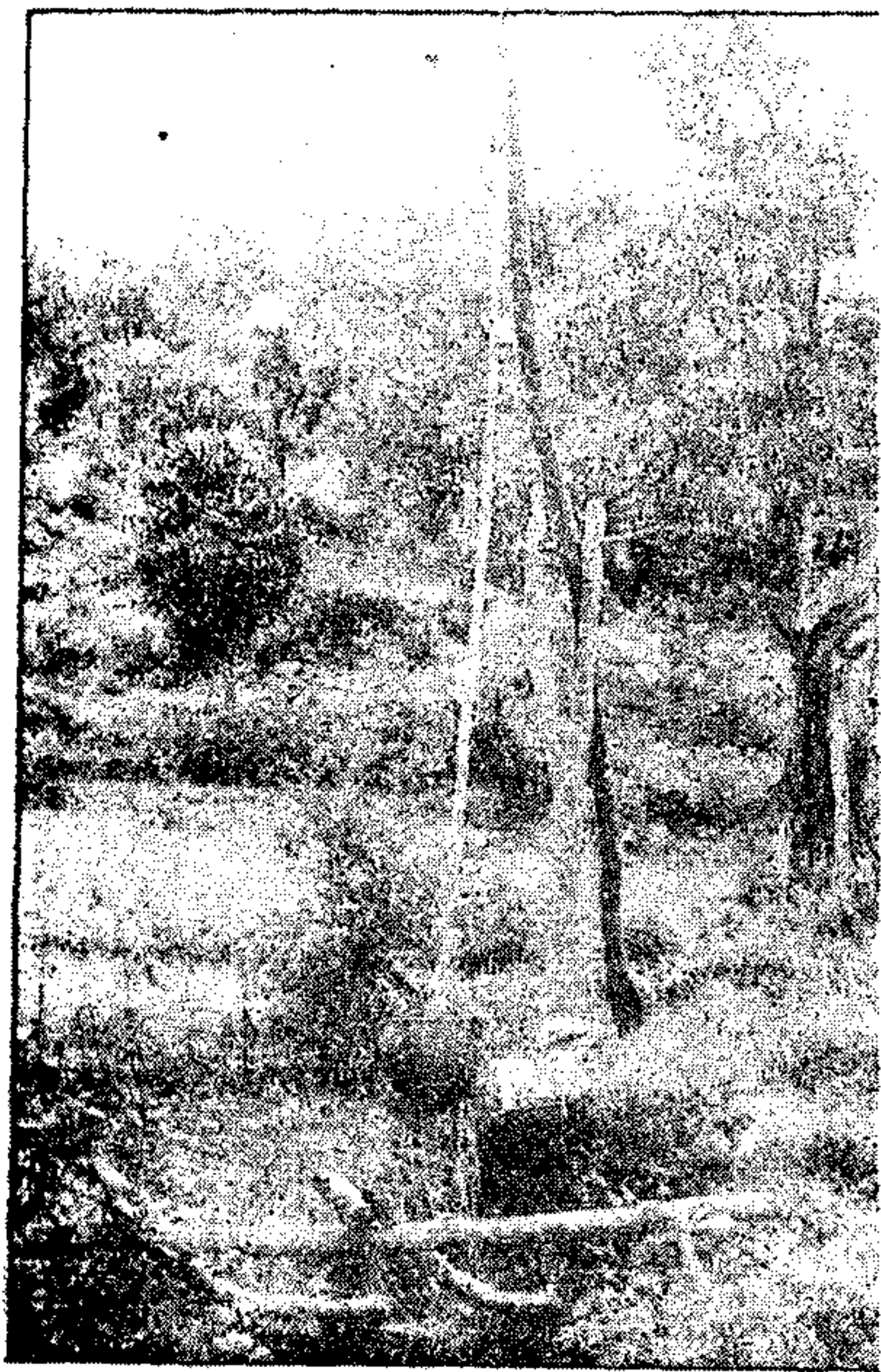
of our traditional wisdom. The knowledge is propagated in many forms such as folk songs, rituals, proverbs, and riddles by which the art of cultivation is handed over from generation to generation. There are also scholarly texts on Indian agriculture.

Much of this existing knowledge of traditional agriculture has not been consolidated and put together. No systematic work has been done in recent times in bringing this knowledge to light. A great deal of work needs to be done in this area. This knowledge of traditional agriculture needs to be not just documented but also has to be encouraged and helped to take its rightful place in the context of the modern knowledge.

Farmers have been making their own innovations and their own selection of appropriate technologies. Sometimes they select technologies which have been rejected by official researchers. An interesting example is that of the paddy variety called 'Mahsuri' which was used by scientists for tests during 1967–68. Rice breeders rejected this variety after two years because of its lodging behaviour. However, this seed reached a farm in Andhra Pradesh through some villages.

Farmers who tried it found that it performed extremely well and as a result of this it has spread from Andhra Pradesh to Orissa and then to West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar

* Reprinted by permission from *The Hindu*, 13 November, 1993.



View of a piccotah



Wooden mortar and pestle



A grain bin



Tribesman cutting 'veppalai' for green manure

Pradesh and parts of Madhya Pradesh. As a result of this farmer-to-farmer extension, 'Mahsuri' is now the third most popular variety among the Indian farmers. Several such examples could be cited. These are the examples which show that farmers should become partners in our agricultural research, planning and policy making, and also that our traditional knowledge should be taken seriously.

In 1983, high-yielding varieties were sown only in 54 per cent of the ricelands. In 1987, 69 per cent of harvested rice area was covered with high-yielding varieties. What happened to the displaced varieties? Were they collected and conserved? Obviously not. The National Genebank in Delhi has a capacity to hold 6,00,000 accessions, but currently only 7,000 rice varieties are in long term storage there. In Sri Lanka, farmers were growing 2,000 traditional varieties in 1959. Today essentially only five varieties are grown. Genetic erosion is equally evident in cereals, fruits, vegetables and root crops throughout the world. The process of genetic erosion has not declined over the past decade despite increasing awareness of this issue.

At the Puri temple in Orissa, Lord Jagannath is worshipped with food prepared from freshly harvested rice every day. This traditional system has been propagated based on the intimate knowledge of the rice varieties then prevalent in ancient India, followed by the varietal choice. Such a system might have been a common practice in the past which was abandoned gradually with the introduction of the modern practices. This concept may be revived and a possibility of harvesting rice every day and everywhere may be reexamined.

According to Dr. Richharia, rice scientists, four lakh varieties of rice existed in

India during the Vedic period. His estimate is that even today two lakh varieties of rice exist in India—a truly phenomenal number. This means that even if a person were to eat a new rice variety every day of the year, he would live for over five hundred years without reusing a variety!

Every variety has specific purpose and utility. Farmers in every part of the country have deep knowledge of their own varieties of rice, of their environmental and nutritional requirements, properties and peculiarities. This enabled them to harvest a crop even under the most severe stress situation. Farmers also possess high-yielding varieties of their own which are not recognized in agricultural extension programmes. Studies, seem to show that yields as high as 12 tonnes of paddy per hectare were realized in the Chengalpattu region of Tamil Nadu around the middle of the 18th century.

There has been a great resurgence of interest in recent times in studying traditional methods of agriculture. The interest has been world-wide and has encompassed diverse areas of plant science such as—agronomical methods, soil testing and soil classification, pest control and crop protection techniques, irrigation, climatology, forestry, nomenclature and taxonomy to name just a few of these areas. These studies have become extremely important in the light of the world-wide efforts to seek alternatives to modern agriculture and evolve sustainable eco-friendly strategies for development.

In most of the countries these studies are labelled as 'Ethno Science' implying that as against 'Mainstream Science', these technologies are only empirical data which need to be further analysed and understood in the light of modern scientific methodology. In this connection India occupies a rather unique position in as much as there has been a

long-standing tradition of theoretical enterprise around Indian plant science called *Vriksāyurveda*.

There are a large number of manuscripts on *Vriksayurveda* which are unexplored. There are separate sections on Indian agriculture in texts like *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Bṛhat-Samhitā*, and *Arthasāstra*. A pilot study of these texts and manuscripts reveal that the subjects dealt with in the ancient science of agriculture consisted of collection and selection of seeds, germination, grafting, cutting, sowing, planting, nursing, selection of soil, manuring, cultivation of soil under favourable meteorological conditions, pest and disease management, nomenclature and taxonomy and botanical novelties.

Maintaining a healthy soil and choosing a right one are important aspects of agriculture. Knowledge of soil and care for its health formed an important part of plant science. The land and its proper utilization occupied an important position in Agriculture and Agriculturists in ancient India were quite conscious of the nature of the soil and its relation to the production of specific crops. This vast knowledge acquired through experience became a tradition and was handed over from generation to generation.

Soils were classified based on their fertility, based on specific crops grown, based on the ploughing and also based on the nature of soil and climate. Sophisticated techniques for testing and improving the quality were known. Soils suited for particular crops were understood.

Collection of seeds, their preservation, treatment and methods of preparing them for cultivation are important agricultural practices. Texts of *Vriksāyurveda* give us elaborate descriptions of these practices highlighting their importance. Grain storage practices were highly sophisticated.

A.O. Hume, on agricultural reform in India (1878), has paid a glowing tribute to the grain storage practices of Indian farmers. 'They are great adepts in storing grain, and will turn out of rough earthen pits, after ninety years absolutely uninjured grains. They know the exact state of ripeness to which grain should be allowed to stand in different seasons; in other words under different meteorological conditions, to ensure its keeping when thus stored; and equally the length of time that, under varying atmospheric conditions it should lie upon the open threshing floor to secure the same object.' □

What need is there even to bother one's head about whether God is formless or has a form? It is enough for a man to pray to Him, alone in solitude, weeping, 'O God, reveal Yourself to me as You are.'

God is both inside and outside. It is He who dwells inside us. Therefore the Vedas say, 'Tattvamasi—That thou art.' God is also outside us. He appears manifold through maya; but in reality He alone exists. Therefore before describing the various names and forms of God, one should say, 'Om Tat Sat.'

It is one thing to learn about God from the scriptures, and quite another to see Him. The scriptures only give hints. Therefore to read a great many scriptures is not necessary. It is much better to pray to God in solitude.

—*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 551

Telling it like it was *

'Long, long ago,...' began Edward M. Edmo. And, as he went back in Time, in role-play at the American Centre, in Madras, recently, he had his audience spellbound. The poet, playwright and storyteller of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe in north-west U.S. talks about the different aspects of Native American life, of the revival of a lost tradition in an interview with C. Rammanohar Reddy.

'The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man—all belong to the same family.

These words were spoken in 1851 by Chief Seattle (after whom the U.S. city of Seattle is named) when the Squamish tribe of Native Americans (American Indians to some and still Red Indians to some others) was offered just \$ 1,50,000 to sell two million acres of land to the U.S. government.

Nature, man and spirits were closely entwined in a culture that in the decades since then has been driven to near-extinction. Trying to keep the tradition alive by telling stories and performing plays is Ed Edmo of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe in north-west U.S. Poet, playwright, short-story writer and traditional story teller, Mr. Edmo ('Our name is actually Orimo. Some French clerk changed it to Edmeaux which another white American clerk changed to Edmo.') visited India recently to perform 'Through Coyote's Eyes', a one-man portrayal of five characters. Each of the five characters—The Elder, The Scout, The Young Father, The Alcoholic, The Columbia

River Fisherman—described a facet of Native American life over the past 150 years. Mr. Edmo spoke about revival of tradition, the role of storytelling, the importance of Nature and other aspects of Native American life.

Q: *Has there been a revival of interest in the culture of the Native Americans? A lot must be lost?*

A: Yes, a lot is lost. I cannot speak my language. My father was punished when he was young for speaking his own language, so I was never taught it. I envy you Indians for being able to speak your own language. But at least now people are trying to revive some of the 500 dialects that used to be spoken. Books and tapes are coming out, putting together the languages that are still spoken. People are also showing interest in preserving the stories and traditions. Here too, several books and tapes containing these old stories are being published. I myself am planning to prepare one such book when I get back.

Q: *How important is storytelling in the Native American tradition?*

A: Obviously grandparents told stories to parents who told their children and so on. Stories about creation, stories about the tribe—these stories were told in the context of the family. Stories of animals—the coyote, the rabbit, the porcupine—these were told during what we call wintertime. Children had to occupy themselves during wintertime, they had to be entertained inside their homes, so they

* Courtesy, *The Hindu*, Madras.



were told stories which told them how they should act, how to share, how to make the young ones smart...stories that gave instruction.

Q: Nature seems to be very important in these stories.

A: We have lived with Nature for centuries. As a child I used to be told by my grandmother to go watch ants in an ant hill. To see what the ants did, how they got along. Children would watch animals all day and see how they behaved.

Q: In the relationship with Nature, land appears to occupy a particularly important place.

A: We believe that land was divided among the red, white, black and yellow men so that it could be taken care of properly. Otherwise there was always the possibility that man would take more land than necessary. Years ago, at a treaty council meeting, the chief of the tribe got up and asked: 'Has anyone asked the land what it wants? Has anyone asked the land what it wants to do?'

Q: In the character of the alcoholic that you play in 'Through the Coyote's Eyes', you have the alcoholic son telling his father, 'I do not know whether to hit you or to hug you.' You said it was a line taken from the tapes of a nephew who

died of alcoholism. Why did you put that line in, especially since it must have been difficult to enact?

A: I heard the tape after my nephew died. And it is still difficult to act out. The reason I put that line in was that we Native Americans are no longer good fathers. When we were sent to the reservation our role as father was taken away from us. And we did not know what to replace the father with. Many fathers just left their families, so there was no positive role model for the children, they were left to themselves.

Q: You say you used to be an angry young man. What about now?

A: As a child I used to get beaten up a lot and I used to have a lot of time on my hands. I used to haunt the libraries and read a lot. I kicked around on the streets and then settled down. I went to a treatment centre and got rid of my alcohol problem. Now I work with Indian youth who have an alcohol problem, telling them Indian legends and stories.

I am not angry any more. I am a writer and an educator. And getting mad does not work, you do not get your message across. It only polarises people. But by telling

people stories you get them actively involved in storytelling and get them to enjoy learning about a culture.

Q: Do stereotypes—the Indian rain dance, the medicine man, scalping, etc.—irritate you? Is there a change in attitude towards Native Americans?

A: Certainly there has been a change. There is now a greater acceptance of native Americans and their culture. In recent years, Indians were asked to sit on curriculum boards to participate in textbook revision, to correct distorted descriptions of Native Americans. No, I don't get upset with stereotypes. That is all people know, their

information is limited and that is why I tell my stories. Incidentally, scalping was not an Indian practice. It was begun by the whites in the eighteenth century during the reign of King George III.

Q: There is very little description of women in Native American society. Why is that?

A: It should not have been so. Native American society was a matriarchal one. Women used to sit in tribal council meetings. In many tribes, women used to choose the chief. But then it is mainly men who have written the history of Native Americans. And when they write, they write HIStory. □

Our Silent Communication

(Continued from page 381)

havoc, especially in the developing societies. Rising expectations and lagging fulfilment have contributed to the rapid disintegration of the social and moral fabric of traditional societies. The global audio-visual entertainment industry has severely jolted the customary habits of the people in these traditional societies, who are fast losing their cultural moorings. Rise of peoples' power has, in its trail, aggravated conflicts among different ethnic and religious groups in some nations.

Looking at the emerging global situation created by the new communication technology, a distinguished American journalist and author, Michael J.O'Neil, has observed in his recently published book, *The Roar of the Crowd*:

The rush of new communications technology is testing the very limits of social tolerance and adjustment, so there is a kind of race between the rational, and the urge to destroy, which also lurks in every human psyche. If the democratic

surge is to be sustained and reason is to prevail over the urge to destroy, then knowledge must prevail over information, and wisdom over mass TV emotions.

To paraphrase T.S. Eliot's anguished cry, 'How to acquire the knowledge that is lost in information, the wisdom that is lost in knowledge.' The answer is—through introspection and concentration of mind. One has to delve deep inwards in search of the finer cause behind the grosser effect. Wisdom is to be invoked through meditation—yoga.

It is only when our actions are guided by our wisdom (*prajñā*), that we shall be able to ensure that the new communication technology, the product of man's inventive brain, does not guide the future course of human civilization on its own terms, but that man, who stands apart from the ever-changing world, will wisely control its technology at every stage, for the overall benefit of mankind. □

Devi Roopbhavani's Ten Verses on Nirvana

Translated by

MS APARNA DAR

(Continued from the previous issue)

नेरुलजा रमनू पर रूफ निदारा
स्नेष्ठ थेथ संहारी वेलयू चेथ
अद्रेष्टो अग्रन्थो निजानो प्रसन्नो
आदिदीव तथ निहानो नेष्कल थेररूफ
अन्तर मोखी द्रेष्टी नेरवान रहस्य तती परमगती ॥ ६

*Nerlajā ramanū para rūpha nidārā
sreṣṭha thetha saṁhārī velay cetha
adreṣṭo agrantho nijāno prasanno
ādidīva tath nihāno neṣkala thera-rūpha
antara mokhī dreṣṭī neravāna
rahasya tatī paramagatī. (6)*

नेरुलजा, *nerlajā*—breaks social conventions; रमनू, *ramanū*—wanders; पर रूफ निदारा, *para rūpha nidārā*—seeing nothing but the True Self everywhere; स्नेष्ठ, *sreṣṭha*—creation; थेथ, *thetha*—preservation; संहारी, *saṁhārī*—destruction; वेलयू, *velay*—the state after destruction; चेथ, *cetha*—merge; अद्रेष्टो, *adreṣṭo*—while seeing, he does not see; अग्रन्थो, *agrantho*—while reading, he does not read; निजानो, *nijāno*—while knowing everything he remains unknowing; प्रसन्नो, *prasanno*—blissful, joyful; आदिदीव, *ādidīva*—Ishta devatā; निहानो, *nihāno*—without modifications; तथ, *tath*—this; थेररूफ, *therarūpha*—indestructible, eternal form; नेष्कल, *neṣkala*—pure.

Disregarding the conventions of society, such a (self-realized) person wanders about, seeing nothing but the True Self everywhere.

Beyond the states of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, he is merged in the eternal state of Being.

He does not see the universe; he does not read books; he remains unknowing, and he is always blissful.

With an unwavering mind, he contemplates the pure, eternal and indestructible form of his Ishta Devatā (chosen spiritual Ideal).

When a devotee looks inwards, within his own soul, he realizes the secret of liberation, and attains to the supreme State.

लुद्र वुच्चा न आसा न गुत्री न बाशी
न कुली न क्रेत्यं महानन्द रूपम्
शेयुम् थान वासी आदि सर्व मध्यम्
जिता सान्यासी न बेउन् बेन्द नादी
अन्तर मोखी द्रेष्टी नेरवान रहस्य तती परमगती ॥ ७

*Ludra vuccā na āsā na gutrī na bāśī
na kulī na kretyam mahānanda rūpam
śeyum thāna vāsī ādi sarva madhyam
jitā sannyāsī na beun benda nādī
antara mokhī dreṣṭī neravāna
rahasya tatī paramagatī. (7)*

न लुद्र, *na ludra*—no rudrāksha rosary; वुच्चा, *vuccā*—utter mantra; न आसा, *na āsā*—no desires; गुत्री न बाशी, *gutrī na bāśī*—does not remain within the caste rules of gotra; न कुली, *na kulī*—no ancestry; न क्रेत्यं, *na kretyam*—no external pūjā; महानन्द रूपम्, *mahānanda rūpam*—state of supreme bliss; शेयुम् थान वासी, *śeyum thāna vāsī*—dwells in the Ājñā Chakra (sixth Chakra); आदि सर्व मध्यम्, *ādi sarva madhyam*—dwells in the entire universe; जिता सान्यासी, *jitā sannyāsī*—sannyāsi who has conquered his own soul; बेन्द नादी, *benda nādī*—Nāda and Bindu; न बेउन्, *na beun*—undif-

ferentiated.

The liberated saint does not use a rudrāksha rosary nor does he utter any mantra; he has no desires, nor does he remain within the caste rules of gotra (class).

He has no ancestry, nor does he perform any pūjā (external worship). He is always in a state of supreme Bliss.

His mind is always in the sixth Chakra (Ājñā Chakra), and for this reason he pervades the entire universe.

He is a sannyāsi (monk) who has conquered himself. He has undivided divine Consciousness.

When a devotee looks inwards, within his own soul, he realizes the secret of liberation, and attains to the supreme State.

न जाया न जन्मो दग्द कर्मकाण्डी
यथा शान्त बस्मी अरूपा स्वरूपम्
सु सर्व सोखी अदेहो समादि
अमोह सावदानं तथ निष्कल निराकार
अन्तर मोखी द्रेष्टी नेरवान रहस्य तती परमगती ॥ ८

*Na jāyā na janmo dagda karma-kāṇḍī
yathā śānta basmī arūpā svarūpaṁ
su sarva sokhī adeho samādi
amoha sāvadānaṁ tath niṣkala nirākāra
antara mokhī dresṭī neravāna
rahasya tatī paramagatī. (8)*

न जाया, *na jāyā*—no wife; न जन्मो, *na janmo*—no births; दग्द कर्मकाण्डी, *dagda karma-kāṇḍī*—risen above all duties; यथा, *yathā*—like; शान्त, *śānta*—calm; बस्मी, *basmī*—ashes; स्वरूपम्, *svarūpaṁ*—his nature; अरूपा, *arūpā*—formless; अदेहो समादि, *adeho samādi*—samadhi in which body-consciousness is completely lost; सु सर्व सोखी, *su sarva sokhī*—always happy; अमोह, *amoha*—without attachment; सावदानं, *sāvadānaṁ*—alert, watchful; तथ निष्कल निराकार, *tath niṣkala nirākāra*—absorbed in the timeless, formless Brahman.

Such a liberated saint has no wife, and he has no re-birth. He has risen above all

prescribed duties.

His presence is as calm as the ashes. His nature is formless.

He is always full of Bliss, immersed in Samadhi, unconscious of his body.

He is without attachment, always alert, and absorbed in the timeless, formless Brahman.

When a devotee looks inwards, within his own soul, he realizes the secret of Liberation, and attains to the supreme State.

अहं त ममता गालिथ थेथ प्रेलय ना आसे
युथ ना आसे मीलित्थ कवलदल जल बेन्द
मध्य आकाशी कदाचित् ब्रेछ ना आसे
लंगि न तु क्या वाचे फला रस ग्येनी
शेला जल संग अगुन दाह बस्मो
साद तैय पसमु सर्व अन्तर स्नेष्टी
अन्तर्मुखी द्रेष्टी नेरवान रहस्य तती परमगती ॥ ९

*Ahaṁ ta mamatā gālitha yetha prelaya
nā āse
yuth nā āse mīlith kavaladala jala benda
madhya ākāśī kadācit brecha nā āse
laṅgi na tu kyā vāce phalā rasa gyenī
śelā jala saṅga aguna dāha basmo
sāda taiya pasamu sarva antara sresṭī
antarmukhī dresṭī neravāna
rahasya tatī paramagatī. (9)*

अहं त ममता गालिथ, *ahaṁ ta mamatā gālitha*—false ego has dissolved (melted away); थेथ प्रेलय ना आसे, *yetha prelaya nā āse*—free of the states of creation and destruction; युथ ना आसे मीलित्थ, *yuth nā āse mīlith*—the meeting between the soul and the Supreme is not like; कवलदल जल बेन्द, *kavaladala jala benda*—the drop of water on a lotus leaf; कदाचित् मध्य आकाशी, *kadācit madhya ākāśī*—unlikely in the infinite skies; ना ब्रेछ आसे, *nā brecha āse*—for a tree to start growing; क्या वाचे, *kyā vāce*—what speech; न तु लंगि, *na tu laṅgi*—beyond all limits of description; फला रस ग्येनी, *phalā rasa gyenī*—the fruit of his sādhanā is obtaining the taste of spiritual knowledge; शेला जल अगुन दाह बस्मो संग, *śelā jala aguna dāha basmo saṅga*—harder than stone, more yielding

than water, more fiery than flames, more calm than ashes; सर्व अन्तर स्नेही, *sarva antara sresthī*—within his meditation the entire objective world exists; साद, *sāda*—supreme Reality; पसम्, *pasamū*—wonderstruck.

The liberated saint has dissolved his ego and attachment, and is freed from the cycle of creation and destruction.

He mingles intimately with the supreme Being, unlike a drop of water on a lotus petal.

This union is as unimaginable as the existence of a tree growing in the middle of the sky.

Beyond all limits of description, what speech can explain this? For, the fruit of his sadhana is obtaining the essence of spiritual knowledge.

He is sometimes harder than stone; sometimes more yielding than water; sometimes more fiery than flames, and at other times more calm than ashes.

Wonderstruck, he dwells in divine Consciousness and within his inner meditation the entire objective world has its existence.

When a devotee looks inwards, within his own soul, he realizes the secret of Liberation, and attains to the supreme State.

वीदवाख् अर्था अम्रेत् नदी संप्रीता
अनीख् प्रवाही समनय् षोडशचन्द्र कल्
स पण्डिता समदर्शयग्नी अरचनीदीव
सु नेरमल तोत्री सथ् तव पाठि
सर्वत्र जगद् ग्वरू सीवा अनन्त पूजनी एक
अन्तर्मुखी द्रेष्टी नेरवान रहस्य तती परमगती ॥ १०

*Vīdavākh arthā amret nadī saṁprītā
anīkh pravāhī samanay ṣoḍaśacandra kal
sa paṇḍitā samadarśayagnī aracanīdīva
su neramala totṛī sath tava pāṭhi
sarvatra jagad gvarū sīvā
ananta pūjanī eka
antarmukhi dresthī neravāna
rahasya tatī paramagatī. (10)*

वीदवाख्, *vīdavākh*—the utterances of the Vedas; अर्था, *arthā*—meaning; अम्रेत्, *amret*—amrit (nectar); नदी, *nadī*—river; संप्रीता, *saṁprītā*—becoming fulfilled; अनीख्, *anīkh*—several; प्रवाही, *pravāhī*—flowing; समनय्, *samanay*—harmony; षोडशचन्द्र कल्, *ṣoḍaśacandra kal*—all the sixteen phases of the moon; स पण्डिता, *sa paṇḍitā*—a true pandit (man of knowledge); समदर्शयग्नी, *samadarśayagnī*—sees all beings with an equal eye; अरचनीदीव, *aracanīdīva*—worthy of unending reverence and worship; तोत्री, *totṛī*—correct reciter of hymns; सथ् तव पाठि, *sath tava pāṭhi*—truthful reader of scriptures; सर्वत्र जगद् ग्वरू, *sarvatra jagad gvarū*—teacher of all humanity; सीवा अनन्त पूजनी एक, *sīvā ananta pūjanī eka*—one in a million, worthy of reverence and worship.

The liberated saint knows the meaning of the utterances of the Vedas. He drinks from the river of Immortality, and becomes fulfilled.

Several currents of knowledge stand harmonized within him, just as all the sixteen phases of the moon are (as it were) unified in the full moon.

He is truly a pandit (man of knowledge); he sees all creatures with an equal eye, and he is worthy of reverence.

Full of purity, he is the correct reciter of hymns and the true reader of the scriptures.

He is the teacher of all humanity, one in a million, and worthy of unending worship.

When a devotee looks inwards, within his own soul, he realizes the secret of Liberation, and attains to the supreme State.

(concluded)

Neither pleasure nor pain, nor good nor evil, ever touches this knower of Brahman, who always lives without the body-idea.

—Vivekacūdāmaṇi, 545

Mundaka-Upanishad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ,
कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ।

*Śaunako ha vai mahāśālo'ṅgirasam
vidhivadupasannah papraccha,
kasmin-nu bhagavo vijñāte
sarvamidam vijñātam bhavafiti. (I.i.3)*

Śaunaka, indeed known as a great householder, having approached Aṅgiras according to the rules, asked, 'O blessed sir, through understanding what, pray, does all this (world) become known?'

Now a practical situation is being created to make the Upaniṣadic wisdom easily understood by us. *Mahāśāla* means a person of limitless possessions and achievements, a perfect specimen of a successful human being. *Mahāśāla* also suggests that a genuine quest for spiritual wisdom is not for the escapists or defeatists in this world. One must go through the whole gamut of human experience and understand successes and failures before becoming a truly successful person. Along with this, in the process of self-education, one must also acquire such qualities as make an outstanding receptacle of wisdom.

Basically the Upaniṣad says something surprising. Śaunaka, a person of unlimited worldly achievements, also made himself worthy of asking a question about the ultimate Reality.

He was not like that man who went to a *ṛṣi* and asked to live in his ashrama to study *Ātma-vidyā* or *Brahma-vidyā* (knowledge of

Ātman or Brahman). To his question the *guru* explained the responsibility of a *śiṣya* (student) thus: 'A *śiṣya* should get up at 3:30 am, wash himself, meditate and say his prayers. Then he must go to the forest to collect wood for the daily *yajña* and *havana* (fire rituals), then look after the cattle and the garden, clean the āshrama, and so on till night fall.' The would-be disciple asked: 'What are the duties of the *guru*?' The *guru* replied that he has to sit and answer all the questions put to him. The man said, 'In that case, make me a *guru*!'

The fact was that the *guru* had already passed through the hardships of discipleship and now wanted to test the new student's capacity, seriousness, how sacrificing and how persevering he would be, and what price he was ready to pay for the highest knowledge. But this easy-going man thought that the *guru* had nothing to do. Only that man is fit to receive his knowledge who has done his duties properly—in an ethical manner, giving full legitimate play to his faculties—, and is intellectually receptive and emotionally responsive. Śaunaka was such a man.

Mahāśāla indicates that the person had not run away from life's duties and responsibilities, and had been proclaimed a successful person. Not by doing his duties by hook or by crook to make money, but by following the norms of morality, not by trickery but by the sweat of his brow, he had earned the reputation of being an enlightened person. So he had really gone through the preparation to be worthy to

receive the wisdom which till then was not known to him. Thus, Śaunaka was just the right person to ask that question.

Śaunaka approached the *guru* in a particular manner, according to the rules laid down in the scriptures. Regarding these rules the Upaniṣad says later, '*samit-pāṇihī*', etc. (I.ii.12–13), the substance of which is this: If one is not receptive, but '*mahāmanā anūcānamānī stabdhah, conceited, proud of being learned, and immodest*' as the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* says (VI.i.2), then one is unable to accept in the right spirit what is taught. So, in a receptive mood, with modesty, humility, and a desire for learning something heretofore unknown to him, Śaunaka approaches Angiras, as a pupil desiring the guidance of a *guru*. This approach wins over the *guru* whereas an arrogant approach with an unreceptive, unresponsive and absolutely egoistic mind repels the *guru*.

Papraccha means, Śaunaka asked precisely, without any confusion. Such precision in logical thinking and questioning is a necessary preliminary condition that makes one a fit receptacle for the teaching to follow.

Śaunaka had only a vague knowledge of the Ātman, and he had merely heard of something called *Brahmavidyā* by acquiring which everything is known. He had everything the world could give him, but he did not have this knowledge. He thought, 'How is it that I have not known it till now?' So he became restless to have this ultimate wisdom. He wanted to verify the truth of this subject. But he had not yet found a person to teach him this subject. If true, he wanted to ask a person who was in a position to impart that wisdom to him. Finally, he found Angiras, the inheritor of this wisdom that had been passed on through an unbroken chain of *guru* and disciples as recited in the first two *mantras*. That is why he puts his

question in this way: 'Is there anything by knowing which the secret mystery of the whole universe is known?'

Vijñāte means *viśeṣarūpeṇa jñāte*. *Jñāna* is knowing through the five sense organs and the intellect. *Vijñāna* here is what Sri Ramakrishna used to explain with an example—knowing milk not only by hearing about it, and seeing, touching, smelling and tasting it, but also by drinking it, digesting it, being nourished by it and becoming strong. This alone is complete knowledge. Similarly, the knowledge about Brahman can be talked about endlessly and we may become great scholars of Vedantic learning. We may even impart that intellectual knowledge to others through the medium of language. But the question is, Has it changed our personality and outlook, and made us *Brahmajñānis*, *Ātmavits*, or *Brahmavits* with *vijñāna* about Ātman, Brahman? *Vijñāna* implies that knowledge about Brahman has gone beyond the intellectual level, it has been absorbed till one's personality has become saturated with it, and a new personality has evolved based on the experience of Ātman or Brahman.

So Śaunaka is no longer interested in the intellectual knowledge of Brahman, but wants his personality to evolve on the awareness of Ātman or Brahman as his true original nature. He wants to transform himself into the Divine personality and overcome his human limitations. Hence the term, *vijñāte* has been used instead of *jñāte* (on being known).

(to be continued)

Not two nor many, 'tis but One.
And thus in me all me's I have,
I cannot hate, I cannot shun
Myself from me—I can but love!

—Swami Vivekananda

Practical Vedanta

WHAT IS SO FISHY ABOUT US?

Once a Paramahansa was taking a walk with some of his disciples. Soon they came to a spot where a fisherman was casting his net and catching fish. He stood watching for a few moments and then told his disciples, 'Watch carefully and see how different are the reactions of the fish caught in the net.'

The disciples saw that most of the fish were lying still in the net, making no effort to escape. Some were trying to escape but were unable to get free. Some others had managed to escape and were swimming happily in the water.

The Paramahansa explained to his disciples, 'As there are three types of fish caught in the net, so there are three kinds of men. There is one class that is so ensnared in the material world that they have no inclination to escape from this net of maya. There is another kind—they make an effort to escape from this net but do not succeed. And there is the third category of those who with intense effort eventually find liberation.'

At this, one of the disciples spoke, 'Gurudev! There is one other type about whom you have not told us.'

'Yes,' the Paramahansa replied, 'this last is the category of the ever-free souls, who are like those fish that never go near the net and so are never ensnared.'

Reviews and Notices

VEDIC THOUGHT AND WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY: By Dr. Shivaram Karikal, with a Foreword by Swami Satchidananda; publ. Arathi Publications, Hat Hill, Mangalore. 575 006, Karnataka, India; pp. 289; Rs. 150/-, US\$ 30.

In a recent study entitled *Beyond Therapy, Beyond Science*, Anne Wilson Schaef observes: 'Psychotherapy is harmful in that the science on which it is based sees people as objects, and those objects are only acted upon externally, denying the role of volition and self-action. This sets up a victim mentality, and victims never get better.' Consequently, she says, 'a Living Process Paradigm,' in which not only ecology and environment but 'spirituality as a "given"' is necessary. This will involve 'a shift of consciousness from our human-centered perception of the world.'

Dr. Shivaram Karikal's thorough and thoughtful study is, in the context of this perceptible shift of emphasis in Western psychology and psychotherapy, a valuable exploration of the field. As a medical doctor and a trained psychiatrist with the background of practice in UK for many years, Dr. Karikal obviously writes from first hand acquaintance and, what is more, a genuine concern to imbue psychotherapy with more than a behavioural bias. As he rightly declares, he is 'deeply disillusioned with the academic psychiatry based on Western psychology, culture, philosophy and neuroscience'. This disillusionment led him to find in Vedic systems of thought, such as Yoga, several correctives to the apparent imbalances in Western concepts of mind and consciousness.

With this background Dr. Karikal approaches the difficult area with a thoroughness and clarity generally absent from the alleged comparative studies of Yoga and Western psychology. The overall

design of the book is meticulous and far-ranging in its implications. Consisting of eight chapters, the study begins with a discussion of 'consciousness', and the psychological approaches to it. Then it traces the roots of the contemporary crisis in Western psychology to its cognitive and epistemological premises; we are then given the core of the book: the hinterland of the Vedic/Yogic systems and their curious correspondences with some of the assumptions of modern, quantum physics. The final chapters (2) consider the techniques of Yogic healing and Vedic insights in comparison with Western schools. There are also exercises given for *dhyāna*.

Dr. Karikal's basic assertion is clear and convincing: 'In understanding the human mind, Western psychology has adopted the psychological approach using descriptive and behavioural parameters', which are partial and lead to the assertion of the 'selfish genes' without any attempt at transcendence. It is therefore, 'operationally adequate' but 'unconvincing'. In other words, Western psychiatric practice does not postulate or believe in any level of consciousness other than the neurological. Indeed, there are (or used to be?) systems of thought which held that 'thought' itself is an epiphenomenon of the brain. (An effective controversion of this puerile view is assertively evident in David Bohm's recent *Thought as a System*, Routledge, 1993, which psychologists would do well to read.)

Compared to this, Patanjali's map of consciousness envisages several levels of the *chitta* (mind stuff), the *chitta-bhūmis* (levels) and corresponding *avasthās* (states). By training the 'mind' systematically, we are led gradually to achieve a balancing and harmonizing of the various levels, but all oriented to final transcendence. The freedom which Yoga/Vedanta envisages is not what Aldous Huxley described as the aim of Western psychotherapy: 'to make troubled people adjust themselves to the

society of less troubled people': Yoga, however, as Dr. Karikal rightly says, is not cerebral in its view of freedom: it is not 'an intellectual concept' but a freedom which emerges from 'a freedom to choose by directing full attention'. In short, Yoga has 'both epistemological validity and operational validity'.

Thus in Chapter 8, the final one, we have a convincing, cogent and clear exposition of Yoga and the steps to liberation. I would specially commend Dr. Karikal's comments on *Antarmouna* (inner silence) and *Sākshībhāva* (witnessing mode).

In a book written with caution and conviction, it is disconcerting (at least to me) to find the author share some of the general weaknesses of comparatists: for instance, there are generalizations that sound populist and opinionated: 'Western psychology considers man as a helpless victim of unknown forces, drifting at crossroads. He is seen as passive and defeated and a moral degenerate.' (p. 22) I think such clichés are not necessary to make one's point. Similarly, the author's views on Jung—while by and large balanced—are, I think, not defensible: that he was 'brilliant but misled', 'profound but shortsighted' and 'could not dive deep into man's centre' (p. 206) seem to me to miss the empirical and yet open nature of his explorations.

This seems to me a repetition (regrettable in post-colonial cultures) of the mistake that Western thinkers committed: blowing up their own culturally constructed models as natural, rational and *universally valid*. Similarly, in our anxiety to explore and contemporize Indic systems, we are likely to claim them as unquestionably universal. This is to ignore the cultural and mythic forms through which even techniques of transcendence have to be articulated. One should constantly remember Ramakrishna's insight: 'As many faiths, so many paths'.

But these reservations hardly affect the book: it remains a substantial, broadbased and closely reasoned study, which is compulsory reading for all those seeking inner transformation. With its helpful diagrams, a select bibliography (a notable omission is

Hariharananda Aranya's classic study of Yoga) and glossaries of technical terms—and, above all, beautiful design and printing—it is bound to be recognized as an invaluable study.

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THE ADVAITA VEDANTA OF BRAHMA-SIDDHI: By Allen Wright Thrasher; publ. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, 41 U.A. Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007; 1993; pp. 179; Rs. 175/-.

Mandana Mishra's significance for Advaita, both historically and thematically, is seminal. This is because, as the author argues, if he is seen historically as prior to Sankara, then in the light of the 'current' of his original ideas 'we must drastically reduce the usual estimate of Sankara's originality'. Thematically, 'Many of Sankara's themes appear in Mandana—e.g. that the universe and its divisions have only a practical reality, not a final one, but that the practical reality lasts until liberation; that liberation is the manifestation of the soul's own form; that something unreal can lead to a real result; that the Upanishads deny all difference; that to allow any *pariṇāma* in Brahman would be to give it parts; and that reality must be free from all change whatever; that the *jīva* is Brahman, but appears to be divided from it by false knowledge and by limited adjuncts.' Thus Mandana Mishra's work is 'perhaps indispensable for an understanding of the later history of Vedanta'.

With this perspective, Thrasher offers us a lucid, exquisitely crafted and cogently argued exposition of *Brahma-Siddhi*, 'Mandana's largest work, his most important and the sole one dedicated as a whole to Vedanta.' The relevant components are comprehensively traced in six chapters in the controlling paradigms of all Advaitic thinking: *anirvacanīya*, *vivarta*, *avidyā*, *nirvikalpa-jñāna*, and finally the curious paradox central to Advaitic philosophy: the relation of error to the revelation of truth.

The discussion is marked by an awareness of the ambience of thought in which Mandana's insights 'evolved'. Thus the linguistic foregrounding in the formulations of the *Sphoṭa* and the controversion of some aspects of Vijñānavāda of the Buddhists. But Mandana does not use, in his own text *Sphoṭa-Siddhi*, the *anirvacanīya* doctrine in, so to say, a full-blown identical way: for instance as Thrasher observes, 'the *Sphoṭa-Siddhi* does not employ' the word *anirvacanīya*, but it does use a similar term *anupākhyeya*, the inexpressible.' Similarly, *anirvacanīya* is rooted in *avidyā*, but the inexpressible is not to be correlated with the Buddhist *sūnyatā*. In fact, Thrasher finds it intriguing that, since Mandana owed allegiance to Sankara's Advaita (the debate with Sankara presided over by the former's wife is of legendary proportions), 'As an Advaitin he might have rejected the *anirvacanīya* theory uncombined with *anyathākhyāti* as being as bad as *Sūnyavāda*, but a Mimamsakara would have been just as eager to refute it for that and other reasons.'

Similarly, Thrasher illuminatingly brings out Mandana's insight into the word, *vivarta*, already in use in Vedānta with *pariṇāma*. Mandana specified 'appearance' to imply reflection, an innovation on his part, and *avidyā*, which have synonymous correlatives in the usage of *māyā*, *kalpanā*, *ajñāna*, etc. But Mandana has a doctrine of 'two-fold *avidyā*', 'which fits in with the rest of his theory of error'. In *Brahma Siddhi*, for Mandana, says Thrasher, 'the presence or absence of faults that cause error can just as easily be the means for discriminating non-apprehension and apprehension on the theory of error as wrong cognition (*viparītākhyāti*) as on the theory of non-cognition (*a-khyāti*).'

In the penultimate Chapter, *Nirvikalpa-Jñāna* is analysed, and Thrasher highlights the significance to the Vedānta system of Mandana's 'analysis of perception', which is 'one of the most important and distinctive elements'. Here, again, we have a crucial discussion of the role of *śabda-tattva*. In fact, the paradox implicit here is, 'A correct cognition follows an erroneous one and depends on it, yet it is obviously stronger.'

This is 'opposition of perception which is false to *śabda* which is true.' The final Chapter discusses how error leads to truth, which again is an illuminating summing up.

This is a definitive study, and recommended to all interested in the area.

Dr. M. Sivaramakrishna

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ: By Nitya Chaitanya Yati; publ. D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., "Sri Kunj", F-52 Bali Nagar, New Delhi 110 015; Second Edition, 1993; pp. 472; Rs. 295/-.

The *Bhagavadgītā* is, undoubtedly, the most popular text of India known the world over. It has numerous translations, commentaries and editions. Each person finds his/her own ideals implicit in this composition and one can interpret it as one likes. All the major philosophical systems—absolutists, qualified monists or dualists—have interpreted it in their own ways and claim complete consistency. The adherents of knowledge, devotion or action schools find ample scope in the book for their exclusive positions. That is why some German orientalist (e.g. Garbe and Otto) have viewed the *Gītā* as composed by several hands belonging to different religious-philosophical systems. But a large number of scholars (including Edgerton) find the teaching unitary.

The title under review is a translation and commentary by two distinguished figures of the Narayana Gurukula movement of Advaitism from Kerala. It was published first in 1981. It contains a lucid English translation by Nataraja Guru (1895–1973), a direct disciple of Narayana Guru (1855–1928). It has explanatory notes and comments in about two hundred pages (in the forms of 'Introductions' to various chapters and assumed dialogues between a teacher and student) by Shri Nitya Chaitanya Yati (b. 1924). It has, of course, the Sanskrit text in Roman script and the English meaning of each word or phrase. It also has a Foreword by Don Berry of Vashon Island, U.S.A.

This commentary is directed, not to

scholars or philosophers, but to every individual human being, regardless of culture, who ponders the nature of his own relation to the divine. Arjuna's predicament on the battlefield of the Kurus is a human predicament of our daily life, and the *Gītā* envisages to resolve the same. Guru Nitya Chaitanya has, through his profound understanding and compassionate attitude, tried to establish a bridge between the Divine Wisdom of the text and the reader. He tries to help the reader in clarifying his views regarding the relation between personal and universal minds. In Arjuna's thirty-eight questions (spread over eighty-five verses) one can see one's own enigmas and search for solution in Lord's words. Krishna's answers (in about 575 verses) have a catholic ring and an apodictic authenticity for all times and places. Man as a species, has certain common psychic characteristics in spite of spatio-temporal changes. He also has certain common problems pertaining to himself. The *Gītā* gives us a clue to discover our real self and solve the riddles of life.

The clue is called *Rāja-Vidyā* (Royal Science) or *Rāja-Guhyā-Yoga* (Crowning Secret) as presented in the ninth chapter of the text. It is the dialectical secret by which one can cancel out pairs of opposites of conflicting situations (like fighting and meditation) and transcend good and evil alike.

The central teaching of the *Gītā*, according to Guru Yati, is exclusive (one-pointed) devotion to the Lord (*ekāntika bhakti*), as given in the concluding verse of the chapter mentioned above, i.e.:

*Manmanā bhava madbhakto
madyājī nām namaskuru;
Mām evai'syasi yuktvai'vam
ātmanām matparāyaṇaḥ.*

The same teaching is repeated with a slight modification in verse 65 of the last chapter of the *Gītā*. Such repetitions pinpoint the centrality of the teaching.

Yati finds an inner homogeneity and doctrinal consistency in the *Gītā*. According to him there is a purposive thread of correlation running not only through all the eighteen chapters, but through all the verses as well, even including the words. The first

half of the text (up to eight chapters), he notes, discusses pure and fundamental principles. The second half (remaining ten chapters) is applied philosophy. The diagnosis and symptomatic analysis of personality is given in this part so that one could discern one's own *dharmā* (*sva-dharma*). Thus the author (or the editor, namely, Vyāsa) of the composition has, in his mind, a structural design although he takes into account various possible approaches to the Absolute in the form of eighteen songs (or yogas or upaniṣads). He has used the epic-canvas to paint the perennial philosophy of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The present commentary claims to have uncovered the philosophy of the *Gītā* objectively by stripping away the manifold biases that have coloured other commentaries. Although it is a utopian claim to be absolutely objective, as the subject-content is non-eliminative, Nitya Chaitanya, by and large, has been successful in his effort. His 'Introduction' to chapter one of the text is illustrative in the context. In spite of his adherence to the Advaitic tradition of Śaṅkara, and knowing full well that Ācārya Śaṅkara (like several others) has treated entire chapter one and the earlier verses of chapter two as explanatory only, and disposed of them summarily, Yati comments on this portion exhaustively and recommends very close attention.

The rich experience and profound understanding of global traditions make the commentator competent to delineate the finer psychological and spiritual aspects of mankind so as to solve the problems of each individual. The volume is a precious addition to the already rich tradition of the commentaries on the *Gītā*.

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ADVAITASIDDHI VS NYAYAMṚTA (PT. I):
By Dr. B.N.K. Sharma; publ. Ānanda-
tīrtha Pratīṣṭhāna of the Akhila Bhārata
Mādhva Mahāmaṇḍal, Katriguppa
Main Road, Bangalore, Karnataka
500 028; 1994; pp. 231; Rs. 70/-.

Shāstrārtha is a well-known practice in India. It is a very important and effective method of knowing the meaning of any classical text. Arguments and counter-arguments are advanced in a disciplined manner to decipher and ascertain the correct position of a statement so as to reach a conclusion. The process could be reopened in case further doubts arise in course of time. The process, therefore, is virtually unending, because of its logical nature. It is also symptomatic of philosophical enquiry. One cannot accept any piece of knowledge as true unless the same is established on rational grounds. Unexamined truth has no place in philosophy. The Buddha also told his disciples to accept his words only after examining the same like a goldsmith (*parīkṣya bhikṣavo grāhyaṃ, madvaco na tu gauravāt*). An article of faith, on the other hand, has the opposite process. One believes and then rationalizes the same.

In the history of Indian philosophical tradition, logical discussions to ascertain the correct meaning of a text are found in plenty. The practice still continues, since we realize that truth could be understood through such argumentations (*vāde vāde jāyate tattva-bodhaḥ*). This is important for the growth of the tradition. In the Vedānta schools of philosophy also we find several interpretations of the texts based on credo-logical grounds. That is why we have several schools of Vedānta. Perhaps the *Vedānta-sūtrās* themselves make scope for divergent interpretations, all logically as well as emotionally possible.

The book under review is a recent addition to the long chain of Vedantic argumentations. It is a reaction to the views expressed by Dr. K. Narain of Allahabad University in his book *Critique of Mādhva: Refutation of Śaṅkara School of Vedānta* (publ. by Udayana, Allahabad, 1964; Munshiram, Delhi, 1988). Narain has attacked the *Nyāyāmṛta* of Vyāsatīrtha (1460–1539) and has shown that the Mādhva philosophers have, at times, misrepresented the Vedānta position and have also refused to take notice of the most important aspect of Vedānta philosophy (i.e. *vivarta*).

It may be noted here that the Māyā-

theory of Advaitism was challenged by Rāmānuja (1017–1137) in his *Śrī-bhāṣya*. It was further criticized by Venkatanātha (also known as Vedānta Deśika, who flourished in 1330) in his *Śatadūṣaṇi*. This evoked a formidable reaction from the Advaita side at the hands of Mm. N.S. Anantakrishna Shastri in his *Śata-bhūṣaṇi* (publ. from Madras, 1956).

Vyāsatīrtha, a great dialectician of the Dvaita school, collected all the crucial points for discussion from the Advaita literature and analysed them systematically. He has shown more than a hundred unacceptable points of Advaita. He has shown, in particular, that since tested perception is more reliable (*upajīvyā-pramāṇa-prābalya*), the monistic theory about the falsity of the world cannot stand. The *Rg-Vedic* statement that the world is real (*viśvaṃ satyaṃ*, II.24.xii) has been quoted in the context. He criticizes the *akhaṇḍārtha* theory and establishes the doctrine of five-fold differences (as derived from the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*). For him theism is the only sane philosophy of life.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1554–70), a monk of the Advaitic tradition from Bengal at Varanasi, in his *Advaitasiddhi*, controverted Vyāsatīrtha and maintained that Brahman is the material cause of *avidyā* (*svaniṣṭha-kāryajanīhetutvaṃ*), as nothing else could be the cause. He held the theory of absolute negation of error. Rāmāchārya Vyāsa, a student of Madhusūdana but an adherent of Mādhva school, criticized his teacher's views in *Nyāyāmṛta Taranginī*. How can the attributeless Brahman, he asked, be the cause of the production of the world? Brahmānanda Sarasvatī (17th century) controverted Rāmāchārya Vyāsa in his *Laghu-Cāndrikā* (also known as *Brahmānandī*; publ. from Kumbhakonam and Bombay). He maintained that Īśvara is the material cause of the world and *jīva* is the reflection of God, and hence related. In relation to the superimposition the substratum is appearance, but primarily and transcendental-ly it is real. Vanamāli Miśra, also of the 17th century, criticized Brahmānanda Sarasvatī in his *Taranginī-Saurabha*.

The neo-Vedāntic position of treating the

Saguna and *Nirguna* as two sides of the same coin (see Swami Tapasyananda's *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta*, Madras, 1991), in view of the classical interpretation, is not tenable. Śaṅkara, the great master of the Advaitic tradition, clearly states that Brahman cannot be double or many-sided (*na cānekātmakam Brahma*; cf. his comm. on the B.S. II.1.xiv).

Dr. B.N.K. Sharma (b. 1909), a great living scholar of Dvaita philosophy, gives a rejoinder to Dr. Narain's charges. He points out that all the masters of Dvaita have discussed and refuted *Brahma-vivarta-vāda*. He declares Narain's points as gross perversion of truth. He also takes serious objections to the usual identification of Vedānta with Advaita. According to him the Dvaita philosophy has suggested a harmonious way of demarcating the respective and legitimate jurisdictions of the consolidated human experience and the intimations of scripture about the life in *Mokṣa*. He underlines the concept of *viśeṣa* as the most outstanding one in the Dvaita system, and considers it important in solving many difficulties facing the theory of creation etc. He has claimed to have repaired the damage done to the reputation of the Masters of Dvaita thought and set the record straight.

It is true that such re-appraisals are necessary, as they clarify numerous misgivings in the respective systems. But is it not true that in spite of so many such rejoinders and re-appraisals particular theories and a number of *Weltanschauung* still hold good for a large number of human beings? At last it is the particular faith that matters, and arguments are advanced to support one's position and refute others' views. The synthetic or the *anekāntika* position, so nicely presented by Vinobha as 'also-ism' (this view is correct, that view is correct, and my view is *also* correct), could be a layman's way out of such impasse. Instead of dialectical encounters we should enter into dialogical situations, as logical defence-offence process is endless.

The work by Dr. Sharma, however, is a welcome one as it throws light on several intricate issues of Vedantic epistemology and ontology. It also marks the *Nyāyāmṛta*

available to a modern student of philosophy. The publication contains a foreword by Professor Ninian Smart, an eminent scholar of Indian philosophy and religion, currently in U.S.A. There are, of course, several printing errors in the edition; they should be eliminated in the next edition.

Dr. S.P. Dubey

ALBERT EINSTEIN, HIS HUMAN SIDE By Swami Tathagatananda; publ. S.K. Chakraborty, 137 Ramdulal Sarkar St., Calcutta, 700 006; 1993; pp. 49; price not mentioned.

In this book Swami Tathagatananda traces the life of the great scientist, Albert Einstein. By stressing Einstein's humane side, the author, perhaps, seeks to exonerate Einstein from all moral guilt in being 'indirectly' responsible for the holocaust that the atom bomb caused during World War II. The author, in the course of his analysis, successfully illucidates Einstein's moral stature. Einstein's painful regret at having created the possibility for the atom bomb is explicitly described by the author. The book is centred around Einstein's statement, 'My participation in the production of the atomic bomb consisted of one simple act; I signed a letter to President Roosevelt.'

Most scientists have a limited view of things and are engaged in the creation of scientific power. But in Einstein's case the paradox lay in the fact that this Nobel Laureate was concerned not with scientific truth alone, but also with moral truths that lead to development of a person's integrity and a comprehensive view of life. The author highlights Einstein's religious and deeply compassionate nature, for Einstein became the most 'uncompromising spokesman for keeping the world safe from nuclear disaster' (p. 49).

This book exemplifies that unless science is blended with religion there can be no true progress.

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